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THE PHILOSOPHY

OF

THE UNCONDITIONED.

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BY

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON.

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In Memoriam

DAVID ROBERTSON,

L. R. C. P., Edin.

THE PHILOSOPHY

OF

THE UNCONDITIONED.

CHAPTER FIRST.

SCOPE OF THE WORK.

I. To such as possess even a very partial knowledge of Philosophy, it is hardly necessary to state, that mankind have in all ages sought after a great starting point—a universal datum, from which all lessons in Religion, Morality, and Social Science could be deduced. Many Philosophers and Theologians have contended, or assumed, that the great fundamental postulate of all reason was to be found in the Idea of a Great First Cause, pervading the Universe, and governing all things by His Almighty Power and Wisdom. But,

II. Although the fact of God's existence has seldom, if ever, been openly and honestly denied; and although the necessary corollaries therefrom have never been fairly controverted; yet, it is unquestionably true, that the full dynamic effect of the existence of a God has never had due regard paid to it, in the formation of systems of Philosophy, and in deducing the principles of subordinate Sciences: always saving and excepting one, and that, perhaps, the best ascertained in the whole cycle of Mental, or even Physical Science.

III. The indirect negativing of the first postulate of all reasoning in the Mental Sciences, has manifestly arisen from some doubt being propagated as to the existence of God. There remaining, as was supposed, some incertitude as to the being of a God, and no little controversy as to His Nature or Attributes, Logicians often preferred to rear up systems of duty and obligation from other premises, or rather, from none at all—ignoring altogether the primary axiom, and the great fundamental truth underlying all the phenomena of the moral world.

IV. It is to look this difficulty fairly in the face; to investigate the nature of those pretended doubts as to the existence of a Supreme Creator; and, if possible, to prepare the way for a final settlement of the controversy, that I now prosecute the present enquiry.

V. At the outset, I think it desirable to say, that I do not intend offering one new argument, or even rendering the old ones more perspicuous, to prove, either the necessary existence of God, or that He does exist as a matter of ascertained fact. Except the termination of a dispute, there is nothing more desirable or satisfactory than a good beginning; and this is all that I can hope for, or reasonably expect from my present undertaking. It will be obvious from this that I do not aspire, *directly, at least*, to have finally settled the great question as to the existence of a God; but I do aver that I will be disappointed if I have not made some progress in the way of fairly presenting the problem for a solution, and a solution, too, that cannot fail to be satisfactory to all concerned. While, however, disclaiming the merit of attempting a full and complete 'proof' of the existence of God, I need not try to conceal my sincere conviction, that to form an order of battle—to place the opposing forces in direct opposition, is all that is required to secure a bloodless, but fruitful and triumphant victory. It is not unfrequently the case, that the party who shout loudest for a trial of strength or skill, are in reality those who are determined not to hazard a contest. Whether this will be the case in reference to the

present undertaking, the experience of a few years alone can determine.

VI. From the length of time that has elapsed since the commencement of the Theistic controversy; from the various phases that it has assumed in every generation, and in every country, as well as in every department of Science, much confusion of ideas necessarily prevails in regard to it. On this account, I find, that to obtain a proper and comprehensive, or bird's eye view, of the field of battle, it will be incumbent upon me to clear away the accumulations of rubbish and brushwood that divert the attention of the onlooker, and hinder his getting a correct notion of the opposing hosts. The magnitude of the interests at stake here, render it unnecessary for a lengthened apology to be made for using any preliminary expedients that may tend to hasten forward and consummate the final catastrophe.

VII. Having indicated the object of my *brochure*, a few observations regarding the contemplated plan of operation may let my reader know something of the route, and enable him to note, as it were, the prominent outlines or landmarks of the journey. After disposing of some preliminaries, I propose to examine the various leading proofs, or arguments, that have been brought forward to shew that there *is* a Supreme Creator; and to exhibit the objections that have from time to time been urged against their validity. I proceed to notice the argument from Universal Consciousness on behalf of Theism; and shew that, from its universality and great importance, A PROPOSITION may, with the utmost safety, be advanced to the effect, that,—There is a Great First Cause. This first truth, postulation, axiom, or maxim, I submit, may be placed on the same basis as a Mathematical axiom, or the strongest of all assertions, viz.,—that which is incapable of denial. After this is done, I intend to examine the nature of the supposed counter-proposition, that,—There is *no* God; and find in point of fact that no such position has been taken up. I also contend that unless this is yet done, and that too within a reasonable length of time, the victory

can be claimed on behalf of Theism; and all the fruits, rewards, and honors of victory appropriated to its supporters.

VIII. There are a number of other subjects, which, although subsidiary to the main issue, are immediately connected with it, and are of so great practical importance that I intend submitting them to the ruthless test of logical analysis. Many may suppose that these subordinate questions form the real bone of all our contestations; and that it would be sufficient to assail them at once, without making a regular attack on the mythical entrenchments of Atheism; but although my stratagem be somewhat indirect in its combinations, I think it best to destroy all the strongholds of the enemy as I go along; so as to prevent the possibility of the worst of attacks, —one from the rear. It is better to make a clean sweep at once, than be continually recurring to old struggles, and be obliged to fight our battles over, and over, and over again. In fine, the proposition,—That there is a God, being formally advanced as a scientific truth, I intend, under the shelter of that battlement, to avail myself of such advantages as the security of my position affords. Like Fitz James, I can say, that this rock shall fly from its firm base as soon as I. If the existence of God be admitted as a fact, then there need be no hesitation in pressing home the natural sequences that follow from such an admission. It is, however, to be deplored, that many would prefer, even with that fact before their eyes, to uphold systems based on sophistry, —they would still be desirous of indulging in their rhapsodistical dreams; but in these cases there is no occasion for meaningless ceremony,—it will not be at all necessary for them to *patronize* Theistic reasonings, as their potency may be ensured alike with, or without the good-will of sophistical friends. Like the unwilling Irus, they must be dragged to the fight.

IX. If the cause of Theism has suffered hitherto from the politeness or the good-natured attempts made to conciliate or convince its opponents, I hope no blame for false delicacy will be charged upon me; for I only desire to appropriate

the awards secured by my own good claymore. I disdain to accept the gratuitous admission alike of friend and foe. I offer the same terms to my adversary that I am resolved to have for myself; I have nailed my colours to the mast, and the words are simply, Death or Victory,—quarter there can be none.

X. Every investigation rationally instituted, says Cicero, should open with a definition, so that the objects of enquiry may be identified and understood. In the present state of Mental Science, it would be no easy matter to submit a correct table of definitions; for it would appear that in proportion to the momentousness of the interests involved, so by an inverse ratio are the tools rude and unwieldy. As, however, any discussion on the meaning of Philosophical terms would take up more space than I contemplate for the whole of my essay, I must just content myself with the usual indistinct and convertible terms, trusting that, (by some stretch of imagination) my general meaning may be caught at. Next to the elaboration of a homogeneous and coherent structure of Philosophy, nothing could be more advantageous to the development of the Science of Mind, or indirectly more beneficial to the world, than an authorized vocabulary; or the acquisition of a set of plain technical terms for Mental Phenomena; and for all the terms and formularies necessary for the every-day work of Metaphysics. Exact and clear definitions are far more necessary in Metaphysics than in Mathematics. In this latter Science, sensible figures and images recall to us continually the definitions of things, so that we cannot mistake; but in the former, pure intellectual ideas cannot easily be represented by sensible signs; and so the terms by which we express those ideas may be equivocal.* Mr. Locke considered this subject of so much importance, that he affirmed proper definitions only were required to place Morality among the list of exact Sciences.

* Ramsay's Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, also, Sir James M'Intosh's Dis. on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy.

XI. A complaint has often been made, that Metaphysicians, while forced to use words of various, and sometimes contradictory meanings, have rendered affairs more complicated, if possible, by their proneness to the coining and use of abstruse terms, and a barbarous phraseology. This obscure language has no doubt crept in from the hair-splitting subtletics of the Schoolmen; and has been kept up especially by the mysticisms of the German School. 'All reasoning,' says Jevons,* 'in Metaphysics or First Philosophy, ought to be carried on in the simplest and most vernacular elements of speech.' Mr. Locke says that big words should be avoided as far as possible; and Mr. Tucker affirms, that no terms should be made use of in Philosophy but such as could be understood by the 'ploughman or cook maid.' Mr. Stewart also complains of the 'jargon, too often unintelligible to the multitude,' employed by Logicians; and now, Mr. John Stuart Mill comes down upon Sir William Hamilton for the frequent use of obscure and confusing expressions, by which the Science is cumbered with a superfluous mass of words. While the evils complained of, and other objections not less weighty—such as the ridiculous phantasies of the Idealists—have no doubt had much to do with rendering the very name of Metaphysics distasteful, and repelled many from the study; yet I cannot conceive a time when scientific formulas, a peculiar phraseology, and a set of technical terms, can be entirely dispensed with. Undoubtedly, such contribute much to the simplification and advancement of Science, and save no little circumlocution.†

XII. Strictly speaking, it is doubtful if the title of the present Essay will bear etymological scrutiny. The term Philosophy is, however, so conveniently convertible, that it might be hard to say what phenomena (in this country at least) could not be included in it. Hamilton states that it is only in Britain that it embraces other than the Mental

* Pure Logic, p. 50.

† See Stewart's Philosophy of Human Mind, Pt. II., C. VI.

Sciences; and, in order to prevent misapprehension, it is in this limited capacity that I intend to make use of it hereafter. There may be a 'Philosophy' in making spectacles, or in fabricating steam engines; there may be Philosophy in Geology; and the student of Optics or Natural History may prefer some claim to be a Philosopher; but the *quantity* may be so very small as to be scarcely discernible to the naked eye; and may be, with great safety and no small advantage, in relation to more important concerns, passed by on the other side.

XIII. Sir James M'Intosh distinguishes the Physical Sciences from the Moral by stating, that they are occupied with the examination of *what is*; while, on the other hand, the Ethical are employed in discovering *what ought to be*. If I have erred in following so great a master,* I now take the opportunity of making amends by affirming, that Mental Science is purely perceptive, as taught by Plato; and that its highest mission is to exhibit as clearly as possible the great laws, and marvellous machinery by which all the movements in the moral world are immutably regulated. These laws *exist*; whether we know them entirely, or even acknowledge their dynamic power, is another question; but any attention we may bestow upon them, or contempt we may treat them with, cannot, in the slightest degree, impair their efficiency, or lessen their potency one iota. The imprisonment of Galileo did not prevent the globe from revolving round the sun. Men may affect to ignore the Moral Law; but as the mind cannot blot out from its records one fact of consciousness, or one act it ever performed, a consecutive account of every event is accurately preserved for the final reckoning. Philosophy in general may be defined as the Science that treats of a knowledge of God and Man. It gives a perception of, or discloses those regulations by which the Moral World is infallibly controlled; but, in the case in hand, it has a limited and conventional, or acquired meaning,—a meaning at the

* Laws of Thought, p. 15.

same time sanctioned by the highest authorities in Metaphysics.

XIV. The due signification of 'Philosophy' can be better understood in its present use, when taken in connection with its allied term—the Unconditioned. This scholastic word is one that, at first sight, appears repulsive, especially to a beginner in Metaphysics; yet, if anything could justify the use of out-of-the-way, or very learned designations, I think much could be adduced in justification of its adoption by me. Man is a creature brought into the world without his own consent; while in it, he is every moment subjected to the operation of laws, both of mind and matter. He cannot, by taking thought, add one cubit to his stature; and although he can do much to promote longevity, yet sooner or later, he must, whether willing or not, submit to the last enemy—Death. Viewed, then, in every possible way, man is subject to certain rules, laws, or conditions of existence; he is therefore CONDITIONED. In these respects he presents an entire contrast to that dread Being, who, it is contended, exists by His own essence,—who maintains an irresponsible dominion, and is in subjection to none. As no one can prescribe rules, maxims, laws, or conditions for His regulation, God is therefore emphatically UNCONDITIONED. Like the abstract phrases, 'The Infinite,' and 'The Absolute,' it is probable that the 'Unconditioned' was intended as a reverential appellation, or veiled name for the Deity.* Ancient Philosophy furnishes many names for the Supreme Creator; but it is doubtful if any of them be calculated to convey to the mind more lofty conceptions of that mighty and incomprehensible Intelligence, whose unseen hand sustains the drop of dew on a blade of grass, while, at the same time, it is guiding the planets in their courses, and upholding the infinitude of the stellar universe. None can stay His hand from working, or say unto Him, 'What doest thou?'

* *Vide*, Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, by John Stuart Mill; Calderwood's Philosophy of the Infinite, &c.

XV. The Philosophy of the Unconditioned is, then, in plain language, a Discourse concerning the Existence of God. It is not in the present instance Theism, which includes an investigation, not only of the existence, but also of the ATTRIBUTES of the Deity. The *existence* of a Supreme Creator manifestly takes the precedence of any or all questions touching His characteristics; for it is obvious that unless He exists, He can have no attributes. To any that might be dissatisfied with the Scholastic term I have used, I may adduce another argument which may carry some weight with it. I have already stated that, if sufficient attention were directed to the Atheistic controversy, a few years might bring it to a final determination: the whole controversy, then, possesses only a temporary interest; and the phraseology now made use of, may be sufficient to see it to a conclusion, without departing from the conventional designation presently in use among Philosophers. The Philosophy of the Unconditioned I look upon merely as a service bridge, —sufficient for temporary use, until the swamp be filled up once and for ever.

XVI. In a short time God's existence will, I hesitate not to say, be taken as a settled *datum*, or *logical axiom*, upon which reasoners will proceed to found their ratiocinations as securely as if there never had been such phantasies as Atheism or Scepticism in the world. The investigations formerly made into the great extent and marvellous minuteness of the Divine power; the wonderful adaptation of all the parts in relation to the whole; the illustrations of goodness every where displayed; may, then, all be made use of to exemplify the ATTRIBUTES of the Almighty, and to raise lofty conceptions in the mind of the humble worshipper, when they shall no longer be required to prove the greatest of all facts in the universe—that of his own Uncaused and Unconditioned Existence.

CHAPTER SECOND.

CUI BONO?

I. A late distinguished Theologian, Archbishop Sumner,* while upholding the great advantages derivable from Revelation, and while admitting the fact, that unassisted reason had reached the grand discovery of God's existence; yet, like most of his countrymen who deny the *Intuitive notion of a God*, endeavoured to render that fact of as little value to pure reason as possible. The same author also says, he has 'indisputable proof that the God of Natural Theology will never be anything more than the dumb idol of Philosophy; neglected by the Philosopher himself, and unknown to the multitude; acknowledged in the closet, and forgotten in the world. . . . . There he remains the inactive Deity of Philosophic Theism.' In the next page, however, our author makes an admission that quite nullifies his own assertions, and admits, inadvertently perhaps, that *Philosophy may, after all, silence Atheism.* If we could get Philosophy,—bad and corrupt as it may be,—to accomplish an object so very desirable, its mission could not be looked upon as useless to religion, or to the world at large. At all events, it will be quite sufficient for the present undertaking, as it will, by logically abolishing Atheism, virtually establish the existence of God as a scientific truth.

II. I have already adverted to the circumstance, that Theism is the only sure basis of Philosophical reasoning. The enquiry at the head of this chapter, then, resolves itself into another,—Are we to have any Philosophy at all? If

* Records of Creation,—2nd Burnet Prize Essay.

we cannot have a system of Metaphysics based upon truth, we would be far better without any, as all reasonings founded upon Error, or built upon a false foundation, can only be productive of misery. 'Error,' says Baron Von Holbach, 'can never possibly be useful to the human species.' In another place the same writer insists, that in order to secure the prosperity of mankind, fundamental errors must be annihilated, and original fallacies undermined. If any misapprehension should exist as to the primary postulate of all thought, then undoubtedly that error must mislead us terribly, in the ordinary application of it to all the affairs of life. But,

III. In order to show that the existence of God, whether admitted or denied, is no trite truism, I shall now allude to several discussions of the utmost practical importance, that stand waiting the decision of the world on the great question at issue. It is quite true that they might be logically decided by assuming the existence of God as a hypothesis; but this would not be at all satisfactory; or, at least, such a determination in the present state of the Philosophical world would be looked upon as somewhat chimerical. One of the oldest and most important of all controversies is that one concerning the existence of Moral Evil in the world; and although the dispute has had all the advantages of the light of Revelation, no more is known on the subject than when it was discussed by Cicero and his prolocutors. Were we to commence our reasonings from the fact that God exists—and that, as God, He possesses all possible perfections—we could not possibly fail to ascertain whether He or man be the offender. Had Milton started his Angels from this datum, and furnished them with a few logical axioms, they need not have had much trouble in arriving at correct conclusions regarding 'fixt fate, free will, and foreknowledge absolute.' In the frequent discussions that still take place on this perplexed subject, no starting point is thought of; and the ordinary way of arriving at conclusions, derived from admitted premises, is thought too much of to be wasted upon

matters of such trivial importance. The consequence is, to use a metaphor of Professor Ferrier, one is playing at backgammon, and the other at bagatelle; and, as might reasonably enough be expected, no one can ever win the game. If a few axioms were laid down and demonstrations employed, one party or other could not fail by such a process of reasoning to be silenced.

There is another subject somewhat connected with the foregoing, that is also waiting adjustment—one, likewise, that was quite as ably argued before, as subsequent to, the introduction of Christianity into the world. I mean that of General and Special Providences, which has recently been much debated in connection with the Cattle Plague. If the ordinary rules of thinking—either of the *a priori* or *a posteriori* method—were rigidly applied, and the primary fact of God's existence kept distinctly in view, much light could not fail to be thrown upon the method by which God carries on the moral and physical government of the world. But although many discussions are begun, no settlement of the controversy is ardently desired; as such might interfere very considerably with *vested interests*, which, for good or evil, must, it appears, by no means be tampered with.

One of the most promising Sciences at present, is that of Social Philosophy. Instinctively, men are beginning to arrive at the conclusion, that they are connected with each other by ties of a most intimate nature. Following the doctrines of the early French School of Social Science, Adam Smith, about a hundred years ago, accomplished most wonderful results by his deductions from certain Postulations; but latterly, his method of philosophising in this department has not only been overthrown,—but subjected to unmerited disgrace and contempt. To argue now from Postulations or Principles, would be a sad insult to the Social Orthodoxy of our *present advancement*; and I cannot conceive of anything that would more readily ensure a man the appellation of a visionary, than proposing to subject our Social Science to rules of any kind, – whether of the analytic or synthetic

description. To go on groping in the dark—to eschew all principles—to deride all certainty, seems to be the rule of procedure now. All this arises from the want of a foundation upon which to rear the edifice; from a non-recognition of the Unconditioned; or from those deductions therefrom, which alone can constitute Social Science. If man could negative the existence of God, and make out that he (man) himself, is his own creator, then he might afford to ignore all the high necessities of thought, and violate at his pleasure all the rules of logic. Let it not, however, be understood, that all investigations into the nature of human obligation have been conducted in open disregard to all the laws of reason. Many of the Greek and Roman Philosophers taught, that Social Science was only conceivable as a subordinate branch of Mental Philosophy, (which of course is based upon the recognition of God); and this feature gives character to the teaching of the greatest of modern schools, viz.,—the Scottish. Late occurrences have no doubt cast a shade over this Philosophy; but the darkness is only transient,—the shadow of a driving cloud,—and it will soon pass away. No better illustration of the downward tendency of popular thought can be found, than is exhibited by the patronage bestowed for the last few years upon a Society purporting to be for the advancement of Social Improvement, but which in reality is utterly opposed to pure reason, and all scientific enquiry. The greatest claim it puts forth is apparently the discovery it has made, of being able to teach Science without the troublesome expedients of principles, rules, axioms, or formulæ, generally thought indispensable to, or what in reality *is*, Science. If a Society could be formed so as to promote the advancement of the *Principles* of social duty, some good might reasonably be expected from it; but an Association whose watchword is, 'No principles admitted here,' can only become a laughing-stock to the world, and a reproach to the very term Science.* But changes, even in

* One of the most characteristic specimens of modern social philosophy, has lately appeared under the rather specious title of 'Journal of Social

great Societies, need not be despaired of; and if this Augean stable were cleansed, and our improved disinfectants liberally used, it might yet become sweet and clean, and safe for public accommodation.

IV. Although I have endeavoured to shew that the great doctrines of Theism underlie all other questions which can affect man, considered as a rational intelligence, there is one problem often proposed for solution which the Philosopher cannot attempt. There is not a more common saying, than that such and such an argument will not convince an Atheist; and, lest any one should suppose that this work has been written with any such intention, I have only to say, that nothing could have been more foreign to my ideas. Were any man to come asking me for a *recipe* for this disorder, I would state that I knew little or nothing of his complaint; but I feared that nothing less than the physical excision of the diseased part would be of any avail. All that can be expected of me in a short tractate, or, at least, all that I propose for accomplishment here, is simply the placing of old arguments in a new light, and the bringing of truth and error face to face. 'Convincing an Atheist' is, then, no part of the programme: my project is limited to matters of RATIOCINATION; to the establishment of theoretical truth;—to objects of purely scientific enquiry;—all of which are totally different from the work of proselytism, however important it may appear, when viewed in relation to a single individual. But although Science may be unable to do anything to enlighten a man against his will, it ought, notwithstanding, to be of great utility to the human race—especially in regard to its highest developments in connection with the Absolute and the Infinite. It is only a spurious imitation

Science.' I have carefully looked over the first number; but have been unsuccessful in finding one passage that could indicate where that article could be found. This preposterous and ridiculous candidate for public support, bears to be edited by a distinguished Member of the Medical Profession; and if so, this can only furnish another significant proof of the truth of the old adage, that a 'shoemaker should stick to his last.'

of real Philosophy, that would *propagate* the modern absurdity that what is sound in theory can be prejudicial in practice. It is a necessity with all Philosophy that it should ever exhibit the realization of Plato's three qualities in Æsthetics, —the embodiment, not only of the True and Beautiful, but also of the Good.

CHAPTER THIRD.

PHYSICS AND METAPHYSICS.

I. Although not directly or necessarily connected with the question immediately in hand, a few observations on the present state of the Sciences of Mind and Matter, and the relationship in which they stand to each other, may be pardoned. For some centuries, Philosophers have neglected the great objects of their vocation; and have been pursuing flying lights on the mountains, or endeavouring to seize some of the flitting 'Borealis race;' on the other hand, Physicists have been making rapid strides, and have doubtless contributed by their endeavours to add somewhat to the comforts and conveniences of life. With retrogression on the one hand, and progress on the other, it need scarcely be wondered at, that the men of Inductive Science are more popular at present with the multitude. Whether Metaphysics should, or will long occupy, such a subordinate place, is quite another question. In presenting some views regarding the competitive claims of each for superiority, it is not necessary to adopt either of the extremes that have been taken by injudicious supporters on both sides. The dispute, at best, is only one as to precedence; and victory does not, by any means, carry extinction. Both domains in Science are important. The question is—which is *more* so? A practical solution of the problem would, no doubt, be difficult, if indeed possible; for each man must determine by his own conscience, how much time and attention he ought to devote to the concerns of the soul, both temporal and eternal; and how much to the supply of mere physical comforts, that perish with the using. The remark may be hazarded—trite though it may appear—

that if philosophers in ancient times devoted too much attention to purely intellectual pursuits, that species of divine folly cannot, with justice, be laid to the charge of the men of Science of the present day.

II. When we survey the achievements of Physical Science, the wonders of Astronomical discovery; the fields of creation opened up by Geological research; the immense development of mineral wealth; the rapid strides in engineering, the marvellous powers of the steam engine, and its manifold applications; the means of locomotion by railways; the spread of intelligence by the printing press, and telegraphs, we might be prone to think that the triumphs of Metaphysics could only suffer by the contrast. And so, in the eye of the multitude, they do; and by a large number they are, by a sure decree, *consigned to oblivion*. George Third's horror of Scotch Metaphysics is shared by not a few in the present day, while the benefits of Physical discovery are proportionally extolled. To hint that the great value of these triumphs may possibly be over-rated, is what would only subject any poor philosopher to unmitigated contempt; and any one who should dream of 'fighting a duel,' as Lytton calls it, 'with the spirit of the age,' should make up his mind for very serious consequences.

III. To one acquainted with the history of ancient civilization, it would not be difficult to prove that, in our present boasted refinement, we have hardly arrived at the height of perfection. For my own part, I should like much to see a comparison of our present status with that of the brightest periods of Greece and Rome. Not that by any means, upon the whole, we are behind them; but, in many points, the comparison would do us good. Our population still groans, especially in landward parts, under, not only the form—but the spirit of Feudalism. Our large towns present features of pauperism and vice, on a scale so extensive, that people may wonder why we should compass sea and land for proselytes to religion, when fields so rich lie unreclaimed at our own doors. Railways and telegraphs have done wonders; but

they have not as yet subdued the misery that exists in the human heart. With all our boasted discoveries, and our splendid applications of Physical Science, it is still, I believe, perfectly possible for the mean sum of happiness to be augmented. We have looked at one side of the picture; may we glance for a moment at the other? All the ancient sages, not even excepting Epicurus, taught that man's chief good was inseparable from virtue; that happiness was a quality of the mind, rather than a condition of the body; and that all the possessions of this world could avail nothing against remorse of conscience. Plato inculcated that the soul should be great and glorious—that all externals were only despicable in comparison with it; and he affirmed, that in the sight of God and men, nothing was, or ever will be, more precious than the soul. The prayer of this Philosopher corresponded with his teachings; for he wished above all things, 'that he might become beautiful in the inner man.' Critolaus tried to balance the goods of the body against the soul; and he found that the whole world would not weigh down the scale in favour of the former. Body was looked upon simply as the shell of the soul—as an encumbrance that was to be deprecated, and its casting off to be longed for; its functions and operations were only to be tolerated so far as were indispensably necessary; and the 'brute' part was always to be kept in due subjection to the Divine part of man. The Stoics and others held the body to be the clog of the soul, which received pollutions by its contact. The mind they considered to be man; and one speaks of having his body crushed, not himself. Socrates, when asked what they would do with him after death, replied, that they could do so-and-so when they caught him; and a modern writer, in the same spirit, speaks of the body as belonging to, but not himself. Viewing Mind as the grand ruling power of heaven and of earth, the Metaphysician claims that *his* Science must take the entire precedence of all others; and that all the Physical Sciences of Astronomy, Electricity, &c., *are but as dross* in comparison with his. Nay, further, many of our greatest thinkers con-

tend, that it is only by the study of Mental Science, and by the application of its logical rules, the material laws can be investigated. This being the case, it is surely of the utmost importance, that mental studies should receive more attention than they have long enjoyed; and further, that the branch of Science treating of the grand foundation of the whole superstructure, that of the very existence of the Creator, should be looked to as the most important of all.

IV. From the contempt into which the Science of Metaphysics has latterly fallen, we may safely trace that Rhapsodistical spirit which now pervades almost every department of intellectual enquiry. One of the most elegant and profound, and certainly one of the most philosophic of all historians, has declared that in no age of the world were principles less understood than in the present; nor could we hope for any other result where their study is proscribed. Nothing, almost, could save a literary effort from failure, (in a pecuniary point of view) if it were based on abstract truth. Periodicals —even religious—must be duly garnished with a dash of the tragic to make them *take*. It is thought indispensable for the lecturer of the present day to commence at the end of his subject, and then shout aloud his declamations; or to amuse his soiree friends by nice anecdotes. So far as the terms Jurisprudence and Law are concerned, they appear, in this country at least, to be words without real meaning.* It would not be difficult to point out, at random, voluminous authors on Court Decisions, and Statutory Enactments, but who are in utter ignorance of Law, in its highest, or indeed, only meaning. Last century, Scotland possessed numerous Institutional writers, many of them of rare sagacity; and although she may not be able to point to a Blackstone, she has no reason to be ashamed of her Homes, Stairs, and Erskines. But so far as I know, these have been, in one sense, Melchisedeks —they have had no successors in office. Any one in our

*'Britain,' it is said, 'has no jurists, but she has lawyers in abundance.' The following authors are quoted in support of this statement: Filangieri, Savigny, Pastoret, Constant, Guizot, Sismondi, and Chateaubriand.

time, who would trace the rise and progress of our legislation, or shew its accordance with, or opposition to, the principles of justice, would not fail to be derided as an impracticable theorist, or set down as a dreaming visionary. So long, however, as every man does what seemeth good in his own eyes, and in opposition to all rule and sound reason, we need not expect great mental enlightenment, or hope for a wider and higher civilization.

V. Somewhat more than a century ago, the foundations of a new school in Philosophy were laid, that presented a bold and intrepid front to the waves of Atheism and Scepticism, which have recently spread so widely over the world. Metaphysics appear to be indigenous to Scotland; and her superiority in this, the highest department of knowledge, was thought to be unchallengeable. Within the last few months, this dream has been, as many suppose, suddenly dispelled; and now poor Scotland lies, prostrate and weeping, at the feet of her conqueror. As when the champion of the Philistines insulted the hosts of Israel, so does the modern Aristotle daily defy the Northerns to battle. In vain do we sigh for the matchless scimitar of a Ferrier; or for the shield of a Hamilton, to protect us from our foes. They are gone; and there are none now to lead our warriors to death or victory. We have looked and waited in vain, for 'that coming man,' Dr. Cairns; and were Calderwood once more to buckle on his harness, our spirits would be cheered; and we might be saved from despair. If a few clap-trap Presbyterial speeches, or even sentences of excommunication would avail, Mr. Mill might require to look well to his armour; but the danger is, that he would treat such manifestoes with disdain, even although they might be intended to do him good. Could a Burnet hold out the inducement for another Aberdeen prize essay, some of our great 'professionals' might be induced to do battle with our assailants; but what Mr. Stewart calls 'the ungrateful walks of abstract truth,' offer few inducements to mere adventurers or soldiers of fortune. We must, it appears, trust our honour to Volunteers, or let it be trodden in the

dust. Now is the time for Professor Masson to deal a blow for his Scottish lion; and even his friend Professor Blackie, by a few of his fiery philippics, might do something to arouse our patriotism. Bad, however, as our case is, it is not so desperate as many suppose. It is true that Mr. Mill has inflicted severe, and perhaps not unmerited, chastisement on our modern Pythagoras; and it cannot be said in fairness, that he has taken a dishonorable advantage of one, now unable to meet him in the field of strife. Even had our late champion been still in his prime, the southern Ulysses might have entered the cave of the Cyclops, and wounded him in his stronghold; but assuredly he would not have escaped to tell of the exploit. No woolly covering could have eluded *his* grasp—no cranny could have been left unguarded by which the adventurous hero could have escaped. Once arbused, the Polyphemé, wounded though he were, would have dashed to a hundred pieces all the 'Dirt Philosophy'* of Utility, the miserable Sensationalism, and shilly-shally Fatalism of Ulysses and his crew. However, in attacking some of the Mystical doctrines of Hamilton, Mr. Mill, it will ultimately be found, has done no little service to the Scottish School, and a short time only will be required to shew that its foundations are laid upon the rock; and that no wind which ever blew, or sea however rough, will dash down her bulwarks. Like the poet's tree of Clan Alpine, the ruder the storm, the firmer it will take root.

VI. Before entering into what will be found the thick of battle, it is hardly necessary for me to say, that although I may have occasion to speak strongly enough regarding the doctrines of living Philosophers, there is not the most remote personal reflection intended to be cast upon one or other. History furnishes numerous examples of the very greatest Philosophers, and the most philosophic Theists, being charged with Atheism; yet it ought at all times to be borne in remembrance that it is their *principles* that are assailed, and

* Term used by Fichte and Hamilton.

not themselves. Some of the most immoral writers, with whom we are acquainted, were men of spotless character; and one especially is spoken of, for his unspeakable piety to God, although, at the same time, his writings militated against His very Existence, and clearly advocated the abolition of all virtue and morality. If, however, anyone were fairly gravelled in an argument on Atheism, I do not say what sacrifice Truth in that case would imperatively demand. Should, as has sometimes happened, a man be openly and honorably pushed into a corner, and still continue to countenance fallacious doctrines, it might be difficult, in such circumstances, to defend him from a charge of insincerity in his public life. But although I may widely differ from some of the authors whose arguments I now mean to criticise, I hope they will not, on that account, erase my name from their list of occasional correspondents—a loss which I should ever afterwards regret.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

DEFECTS OF A PRIORI DEMONSTRATIONS.

I. For reasons which it would now be difficult to understand, it has, for a considerable time, been considered necessary or desirable, *to prove* the Existence of a Supreme Creator. It must have been thought, not only a possible task, but one of paramount importance to the interests of Truth. It is quite possible that another reason may have had much to do with the enterprise: the Schoolmen, instead of bringing their great learning and talents to bear upon the condition of the external world, shut themselves up in their closets, and exercised their ingenuity in all manner of metaphysical subtleties and sophistries. Like the followers of Mahomet, they busied themselves so much in idle speculation about the world to come, that they cared little about what was best for the present. One of our great Metaphysicians observes, that for every theory we advance, we ought to be ready with a practical illustration: had the Schoolmen observed a rule so salutary, it would have saved them from the vain pursuit of many a moonlight shadow. As I propose more fully examining the nature of, and results which have flowed from, the various attempts that have been made to prove the existence of God, I need not here do more than remark, that if this *truth* be one of those so clear in itself as not to require proof, harm could only accrue by placing it amongst the number of doubtful questions. The modes of 'proving' the Existence of the Infinite of course necessarily rank themselves into two great divisions—the methods of Demonstration and Induction; and it is to the former kind that I have first to solicit attention.

II. There have been various attempts made to demonstrate the Necessary Existence of God; but the three that have secured the most attention are those of Des Cartes, Dr. Samuel Clarke, and of Mr. Gillespie—the latter of whom appears to have devoted his close attention to the subject for the last thirty years.* The efforts of the two former authors have been so long before the world, that nothing new can now be expected to be urged against them. They may differ somewhat in detail, but the demonstrations are in reality the same; and the objections urged against the one, may, with equal force, be set against the others. *A priori* arguments or demonstrations, as everyone knows, *proceed from deducing some lesser truth or truths from a greater*; this being the case, it would therefore follow, that God, so far from being the First Great Cause, was only the result of some antecedent *greater* Cause; and that He only possessed a derived, and consequently, dependent existence. The bare idea of anything greater than God,—from whom He, the lesser, derived His being, is at once fatal to the whole argument. It would prove to a certainty that He could not be the Great First Cause. The argument of Des Cartes, which raised so many discussions in the learned world, is thus stated by Cudworth, in his Intellectual System of the Universe: 'It is well known that Cartesius hath lately made a pretence to do this with mathematical evidence and certainty, and he despatches the business briefly after this manner: God, or a perfect Being, includeth necessary existence in his very idea; and therefore he is.' Mosheim, in a note, affirms that the great number of learned men who were opposed to each other on this subject, induced Cudworth to speak with great reserve; but still his idea was clearly against the Cartesian demonstration. 'But though the inventor of this argument,' Cudworth continues, 'or rather the reviver of that which had been used by some scholastics, affirmeth it to be as good a demonstra-

* The Necessary Existence of God, by W. H. Gillespie, of Torbanehill. This work contains Reviews of the Demonstrations of Locke, Clarke, Lowman, Bishop Hamilton, and others.

tion for the existence of a God from his idea, as that in geometry, for a triangle's having three angles equal to two right, is from the idea of a triangle; yet, nevertheless, it is certain that, by one means or other, this argument hath not hitherto proved so fortunate and successful, there being many who cannot be made sensible of any efficacy therein, and not a few who condemn it for a mere sophism. As for ourselves, we neither have any mind to quarrel with other men's arguments pro Deo; nor yet would we be thought to lay stress, in this cause, upon anything which is not in every way solid and substantial.' Instead of following Cudworth's arguments for, and against, Des Cartes, I think it will be sufficient for me to note the conclusions at which he arrived: 'That there must of necessity be a God, or perfect Being existing, seems to be a thing altogether indemonstrable, it implying that the existence of God, or a perfect Being, may be proved *à priori*, or from some antecedent necessary cause; which was before declared to be a thing contradictious and impossible.' In concluding his argument in favour of the Cartesian theory he says, 'that he leaves his reader at liberty to make his own judgment concerning the forementioned Cartesian argument for a Deity, drawn from its idea, as including necessity of existence in it, that therefore it is, whether it be merely sophistical, or hath something of solidity and reality in it. However, it is not very probable that many Atheists will be convinced thereby, but that they will rather be ready to say, that this is no probation at all of a Deity, but only an affirmation of the thing in dispute, and a mere begging of the question, that therefore God is, because he is, or cannot but be.' In another place, our learned author observes, 'that some of the ancient Theists have themselves affirmed, that there could be no demonstration of a God: which assertion of theirs hath been by others misunderstood into this sense, as if there was no certainty at all to be had of God's existence, but only a conjectural probability; no knowledge or science, but only faith and opinion. Whereas the true meaning of

these ancient Theists, who denied there could be any demonstration of God, was only this—That the existence of a God could not be demonstrated à priori, himself being the first cause of all things. Thus doth Alexander Aphrodisius, in his Physical Doubts and Solutions, after he had propounded an argument for a God, according to Aristotleic principles, from motion, declare himself: 'That this argument or proof of his was in way of analysis only; it being not possible that there should be a demonstration of the first principles of all. Wherefore (saith he) we must fetch our beginning from things that are after it, and manifest; and thence, by way of analysis, ascend to the proof of that first nature which was before them.' To the same effect a quotation is made from Clemens Alexandrinus, 'But neither can God be apprehended by any demonstrative science: for such science is from things before in the order of nature, and more knowable; whereas nothing can exist before that which is altogether unmade.' The learned Dr. Mosheim, whose copious notes on the text, and on the Cartesian controversy, may be consulted with great advantage, affirms 'that Aristotle makes all demonstration proceed from things prior to the thing demonstrated, and from its causes; and as God has nothing prior to, or the cause of, himself, it is clear that if we follow the laws of demonstration laid down by the Stagirite, we must deny altogether the possibility of the existence of God being demonstrated.' To the same effect says Kant, 'the celebrated ontological or Cartesian argument for the existence of a Supreme Being is therefore insufficient; and we may as well hope to increase our stock of knowledge by the aid of mere ideas, as the merchant to augment his wealth by the addition of noughts to his cash account.'

III. If ever there was in England a man capable of grasping a question so abstract as the Necessary Existence of God, assuredly it was Dr. Samuel Clarke—'a man,' says Mackintosh, 'eminent at once as a divine, a mathematician, a metaphysical philosopher, and a philologer, who, as the interpre-

ter of Homer and Cæsar, the scholar of Newton, and the antagonist of Leibnitz, approved himself not unworthy of correspondence with the highest order of human spirits.' Clarke's theory is to be found in his great work, A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, and is enounced in his first Proposition. 'It is absolutely and undeniably certain, that something has existed from all eternity.' If this were admitted it would overthrow his second, which is 'That there has existed from eternity an unchangeable and independent Being.' This 'something,' then, would be God, and the 'Being' a result flowing therefrom. As might have been expected, the publication of such a theory by so great a man as Clarke created no little discussion. 'A Gentleman in Gloucestershire,' who afterwards became Bishop Butler, in a lengthened correspondence, attacked Clarke's hypothesis; and if proof were required of its fallaciousness, it would be found in Letter VII., where it is virtually abandoned. 'The argument *a posteriori*,' he says, 'is indeed by far the *most generally* useful, most easy to be understood, and in some degree suited to all capacities; and therefore it ought always to be distinctly insisted upon.' If the Inductive method of proof ought always to be insisted upon, what use could there be for the argument *à priori*? The reason he alleges may, however, throw some light on the question. 'But forasmuch as Atheistical writers have sometimes opposed the Being and Attributes of God, by such *metaphysical* reasonings as can no otherwise be obviated, than by arguing *à priori*; therefore, *this* manner of arguing also is useful, and necessary in its proper place.' It appears clear to me that Clarke erred entirely in confounding two things essentially distinct, viz., the Being of God and His Necessary Attributes. Demonstration, although unable to prove the existence of the Deity, could, as he shewed himself, be applied with undoubted effect in the latter case. Not only so, but it is even more than doubtful if the Attributes of the Infinite can be strictly proved in any other way, or by any other method. That Clarke's famous sophism has not at present a single supporter,

does not say much for its success, and mostly all writers subsequent to his time have pronounced against its validity. 'Roused,' says Sir James Mackintosh, 'by the prevalence of the doctrines of Spinoza and Hobbes, Clarke endeavoured to demonstrate the Being and Attributes of God, from a few axioms and definitions in the manner of geometry; an attempt in which, with all his powers of argument, it must be owned that he is sometimes compelled tacitly to assume what the laws of reasoning required him to prove;* and that on the whole, his failure may be regarded as a proof that such a mode of argument is beyond the faculties of man.' Mr. Gillespie, than whom perhaps no one living is better able to pronounce on such a subject, affirms, 'that Clarke's Demonstration is no more than a pretended one. It is wholly and evidently inconclusive.' Dugald Stewart could only say he had great doubts as to the *à priori* proof; and Dr. Reid while admitting that these speculations were by men of superior genius, says, 'but whether they be as solid as they are sublime, or whether they be wanderings of the imagination, in a region beyond the limits of the human understanding, I am unable to determine.' 'The term à priori,' says Hamilton, (on Reid p. 762,) 'came however in modern times to be extended to any abstract reasoning from a given notion to the conditions which such a notion involved; hence, for example, the title *à priori* bestowed on the ontological and cosmological arguments for the existence of the Deity.† The latter of these in fact starts from experience—from the observed contingency of the world, in order to construct the supposed notion on which it founds. Clarke's cosmological demonstration called *à priori*, is therefore, so far properly an argument *à posteriori*.'

* 'Proving the Existence of God in this manner, is by covertly assuming in the premises the very point to be proved.'—*Whatley.*

† See Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, Transcendental Dialectic, Chap. III. Sections third and fourth.

IV. After what has been advanced regarding the arguments of Des Cartes and Clarke, it need hardly be stated that I can be no fair judge in another question of the same description, as I can only look at it with an eye of prejudice. The objections taken to former arguments *à priori* were before Mr. Gillespie, and he has himself furnished a demolition of Clarke's system. In offering some comments on *The Necessary Existence of God*, I labour under some disadvantages. The authors already noticed cannot speak back, as dead men tell no tales; but this is not the case in the present instance, as I may be called to account for my words. There is, however, this advantage to be noticed, I am less liable to do any serious damage by unwilling misrepresentation; as from the price the benevolent author has allowed his volume to be published at, it can be obtained by the humblest artizan in the country. Although I have paid considerable attention to Mr. Gillespie's argument, or his leading theory, I have to admit that my leisure has not enabled me fully to master the outs and ins of the various controversial papers contained in the volume already noticed. Before commencing his Demonstrations, there is a paper produced under the title of 'Necessary Existence implies Infinite Extension.' This appears to be rather a suspicious looking article, as it seems to be connected with the great question at issue. It commences thus,—'Supposing, that there is a necessarily existing Substance, the intelligent cause of all things, it may be easily shown, that that Substance is infinitely extended.' The supposition here mentioned appears to me to be the base of the whole subsequent superstructure. 'The argument a priori for a great first cause,' is thus stated: 'Proposition 1. Infinity of Extension is necessarily existing.—1. Even when the mind endeavours to remove from it the idea of Infinity of Extension, it cannot, after all its efforts, avoid leaving still there, the idea of such infinity. Let there be ever so much endeavour to displace this idea, that is, conceive Infinity of Extension non-existent; every one by a reflex examination of his own thoughts, will find, it is utterly be-

yond his power to do so.' Proposition second is, 'Infinity of Extension is necessarily indivisible;' and Proposition third is in these terms, 'There is necessarily a Being of Infinity of Extension.' It does not follow from anything Mr. Gillespie has advanced, that an opponent could be called upon to admit the idea of infinite extension: it is not demonstrated, and cannot be proved. He might as well ask his adversary at once to grant the conclusion sought after, as concede the premises from which a conclusion was immediately to be drawn. The argument altogether is a clear example of the *petitio principii.*

But supposing Infinite Extension were to be admitted, that could not afford any *à priori* reason for supposing the existence of Intelligence. The abstract notion of Extension is wholly inadequate to account for the existence of a living creature, far less for the existence of God. If there can be any value at all in the notion of Infinite Extension, (which appears to me to be more than problematical) that value can only be, of the *à posteriori* description, as Hamilton observed regarding Clarke's. Mr. Gillespie has entirely failed to prove his premises; and if he did, they would not only *not* carry, but would entirely overthrow the conclusion which he has so laboriously laboured to maintain. Of this, and all such attempts to accomplish a task which is clearly beyond human power, we may affirm in the words of Dr. Brown, that 'such obscure reasonings are calculated to make one doubt, rather than to believe, in the Existence of a Great First Cause.'

CHAPTER FIFTH.

PROOFS A POSTERIORI,—THEIR DEFECTS.

I. Those who have bestowed pains in examining the evidences which Induction has produced in support of the Being of God, will not require to be informed that the subject is of a most involved and perplexed description. The proofs have been so numerous and so varied, and the authors who have written on these proofs are often so obscure in their views, that it is very difficult to know in what category they should be placed. Again, many of these authors take both the à priori and inductive methods, so that they could be quoted with equal truth on both sides. In such circumstances, it can hardly be expected that error is to be avoided regarding the different authorities; but by noting the writers referred to, my reader may consult them for himself.

II. Although it may look somewhat strange at first sight, for any Theist to attack all evidence, both Demonstrative and Inductive, for the Existence of God, yet a close examination will at once remove any such impression. No really good cause requires the aid of sophistry, chicane, or perjury; it is only falsehood that needs such questionable assistance for its support. Many there are, who, out of zeal for the interests of religion, would press any statements into its service, as if the object to be attained, however good, could justify the employment of any means, however flagitious. Expedients of this nature, well intended although they be, can only, from their very essence, be productive of mischief. The subject before us is the loftiest which the mind of man can grapple with, and we cannot be too circumspect, lest we

should be found putting strange fire upon the altar. As the Inductive proofs are more easily comprehended than the Demonstrative, and are generally appealed to, my remarks apply more particularly to them; although they are as applicable logically to those of the *à priori* description. 'It admits not of being called in question,' says Mr. Gillespie, 'that among the causes of speculative or theoretical atheism, there fall to be ranked not a few of those arguments which have been employed, because supposed to evidence demonstratively the being of DEITY. The reasonings composing the arguments which we have in view are of so faulty a description, that it need not surprise us if they have tended, sometimes to make those doubt who never doubted before. A weak imperfect proof of the existence of GOD, when it does not leave the attentive mind in the exact position in which it was found, will incline it—if any direct effect be produced—to take the first step in the road to atheism. And the reader need not be told that a bad argument for a Great First Cause, must confirm and encourage the Atheist in his disbelief.' Lord Mansfield was consulted by a friend of his, regarding the discharge of judical functions with which he was unacquainted; and that eminent judge counselled him to be cautious in giving reasons for his judgment; as the latter would most likely be sound, while the former would be bad. Some years ago a merchant in France was tried for the commission of a murder, which had taken place in the village in which he resided. The evidence produced in support of his innocence was complete; and a verdict of 'not guilty,' was all but pronounced, when matters took a sudden turn. The merchant's day-book had been overlooked in the exculpatory evidence; and an entry was pointed to, that proved the dealer to have been at home on a certain day. But the entry was written on an erasure, and upon this, the culprit was condemned to death. His cause originally was good; but it was injured by tendering bad evidence in its support. In the same manner, the belief of a Deity has been damaged very seriously, by the fallaciousness of many argu-

ments brought forward to support it. The truth of a statement, and the proofs tendered in its behalf, are two things entirely different in their nature; and they should never be confounded on such an important question as that of Theism. Before undertaking laborious courses of abstruse Demonstrations, or building up piles of ill-considered Inductions, *to prove the Existence of God*, a little attention to a preliminary question might be found advantageous in no small degree—viz., What reasons are there for *doubting* it?

III. Demonstrations of the Necessary Existence of God have, by very competent authorities, as we have seen, been pronounced impossible. The same may be affirmed of all proofs *à posteriori*; the highest point that we can thus reach appears to be that of *Inference*, which, strictly speaking, is no proof at all. Unless man could comprehend Infinity, he could not by testimony declare that God is everywhere present. No witness lives to say that God existed from all Eternity. Again, one man may, by the arrangement of certain facts, affirm that they declare the Existence of a Supreme Creator; another may take up the same statistics, and declare that they convey to his mind no proofs of a God. But if we admit the verdict from facts in the one instance, it is hard to see how it can be rejected in the other. God has, or has not, an objective reality; and any subjective conclusion which our empirical inductions may lead us to form, cannot, in any manner, *alter the nature of the fact*. As there is scarcely a possibility of carrying out any process of reasoning in Mental Philosophy, without a continual observance of the difference between the subjective and objective—the ego and the non-ego—the phenomena within and the phenomena without, the distinction is of the greatest possible importance in coming to a decision, whether God exists independently of our conceptions regarding Him, or whether His reality only exists as a figment of our imaginations. If I am not very much mistaken, a good deal of modern Philosophy is of this description, as it appears quite optional for men to

entertain the idea of a God at all, or even of any kind of one they may fancy, according to their whim and caprice.

IV. Perhaps the weightiest objections which have ever been brought forward to all direct proofs of God's existence, have been stated by Sir William Hamilton.- 'Some carry man into Deity, (as Schelling) others bring down the Deity to man; in whose philosophy the latter is the highest manifestation of the former—man apex of Deity.' Writers like Cartesius, Clarke, and Gillespie, claim for man the attributes of Deity, in maintaining that they have been able to demonstrate His Necessary Existence. On the other hand, men like Paley have indulged in a spiritual Anthropomorphism in fashioning each for himself a God,—thus making themselves as it were the authors of His Being, and lowering Him to a level with themselves. By the *à priori* method of proof, man is deified; by the *à posteriori*, God is humanified, if such an expression might be allowed. The ark of God requires not the hand of man to prevent it from falling; and they who would sacrilegiously put forth their hands to stay it up, must, in the nature of things, suffer from the sure hand of retributive infliction. Men who are perpetually going about exerting their ingenuity to find new proofs of the Existence of God, need not be surprised if, at the end, they begin to doubt it themselves. There are many, nay, innumerable truths, so clear in themselves, that the utmost efforts we can bestow upon them can only have the effect of rendering them obscure and dubious. Man's conscience tells him, in language which cannot be gainsaid, that there is a God: the evidence of that truth is, like that of the truths of Geometry, to be found *within*; and nothing external can ever supplant in clearness or force, the enlightened convictions and reflections of a man's own mind.*

* To those who wish to pursue this subject further, I would recommend a perusal of Gillespie's 'Inquiry into the Defects of *à posteriori* Arguments,' prefixed to the volume already referred to. Russel Edition, p. 8.

V. Having looked into the nature of *à posteriori* proofs in general, I shall now proceed to examine some of the particular branches of evidence, and shew that such an examination will fully sustain the assertion, that they totally fail to attain the object they have in view. They are all characterized by one peculiar feature of resemblance—viz., they are special pleadings—very good if believed in implicitly; but they cannot force conviction, nor form an irrefragable basis for the next step in Metaphysical ratiocination,—the demonstration of the Divine Attributes. The most common work on this subject is that of Archdeacon Paley; and his great argument is *Design*. The Burnet Prize Essays and Bridgewater Treatises, may be advantageously consulted on the same subject. In referring to the Cosmological argument, Kant says, 'it is framed in the following manner:—If something exists, an absolutely necessary being must likewise exist. Now I, at least, exist. Consequently there exists an absolutely necessary being. The minor contains an experience, the major reasons from a general experience to the existence of a necessary being.' He afterwards affirms 'that this proof can at most, therefore, demonstrate the existence of an *architect of the world*, whose efforts are limited by the capabilities of the material with which he works, but not of a *creator of the world*, to whom all things are subject.' 'Physico-theology is therefore incapable of presenting a determinate conception of a supreme cause of the world, and is therefore insufficient as a principle of theology—a theology which is itself to be the basis of religion.'

If I might be allowed to state the question, I should put it in this way. The well-meaning Theist says, there is a stone, it did not create itself, and therefore it must have had a Creator. The Sophist says, I have no proof that there is a stone in existence, or any proof that there can be such a thing as Matter at all. The premise being denied, the Theist is bound to prove it, or allow his conclusion to fall to the ground. Anxious, however, to maintain his ground, he embarks upon one of the wildest schemes that ever entered the human

brain, and by an agonising process of Ratiocination endeavours to prove that such things as stones, rocks, trees, houses, &c., exist, and that there is, in reality, an outward world! See Appendix, 'Idealism.'

As an example of the Experimental proof of God's existence, I may refer to Principal Brown's in reference to the recent creation of the world. He concludes that as the world is only some six thousand years old, the work of a Creator was plainly manifest in so recent an event. However goodly this might have looked some forty years ago, the Theist who would now employ it, in face of recent Geological discoveries, would only be treated with contempt and derision. It has been contended that Motion proves a Creator, as there must have been some original cause of all, to set things agoing at first; but this hypothesis is so far-fetched as to be unworthy of serious confutation. The same may be said in reference to that 'something' and the 'fitness of things',—arguments that cannot hold good according to the laws of reasoning.

Paley's celebrated argument of the Watch, is very good as an illustration; but although he denounced all as Atheists who refused to admit its conclusiveness, I now take the liberty of saying, that if it should prove the existence of a Designer, it does not at all follow that the Designer must be God. Mr. Locke affirms that the existence of a Law proves a Law-giver, and no doubt he is correct; but the Sophist has only to adopt his usual tactics, and the conclusion falls to the ground. There are no premises conceivable which the Sceptic pretends not to doubt; he declines to admit the existence either of Mind or Matter; and as no matter of fact is in any way capable of demonstration, it is thus totally impossible to dislodge him from his stronghold. There is no argument in this world that I can imagine which is fitted to convince a man who is determined *not to believe;* and the attempt to cure such an individual *by reasoning*, is ridiculous. It is no doubt to be regretted, that Sophists exist in the world; but any remedy which could be applied to their disease by *a Philosopher*, would only produce a hundred-fold more evil than

the original complaint. Theists, by Quixotically labouring to shew *that there is an outward world*, have only been feeding the fire they wished to see extinguished; and which, if only let alone, would have burnt itself out long ago. The author* to whom I have already been so much indebted, referring to the great patronage now bestowed upon experimental evidence, says, that a change of tactics would be desirable; and holds out as an advantage from the pursuit of the other system, 'First, a sudden stop in the tune of your mere *a posteriori* men. We should no longer have thrust into our hands whole volumes of *anatomy, botany, natural history, astronomy*, and what not? called, in virtue of an exceedingly small sprinkling of other matter, treatises on *Natural Theology*; we should no longer, I say, have such thrust upon us as containing the only sound arguments to be met with, for proving the first grand article of all religion. . . . A second consequence, or concomitant, would be the quick disappearance of speculative, or avowed, Atheism. A consummation, however devoutly to be wished for, which has never been brought about under the long, presumptuous reign of the oracular-response-uttering Magnates (the true *Dii Majores*) of the Experimental School.'

* Gillespie. Necessary Existence of God, Pref. XXIII.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

I. The object of the last two chapters was to shew that all attempts *à priori*, or *à posteriori*, to prove the Existence of God, break down;—not only so, but are at the same time injurious to the mind. The soul of man desires something else to lean upon than the bare abstractions of Duration and Space on the one hand, or Experimental Phenomena on the other. Man feels that he has a Creator; he knows also that he has a principle of existence within him which will survive the dissolution of his mortal framework, and even the annihilation of the material globe. Into the Phenomena of this Consciousness, and its bearing upon the question of The Unconditioned, it will now be my privilege to enquire.

II. The certainty of the Existence of God is, as I shall afterwards shew, the natural and unbiassed judgment of the mind; and it is only by the learned sophistries of the idle and vain pretenders to knowledge that any sceptical opinions have been formed regarding it. Accordingly, men who, in all ages, have endeavoured to advance the cause of civilization, and to promote the welfare of mankind, have proceeded in their scientific pursuits without ever staying to combat the absurd and baseless dreams of the visionary and sophist, in regard to the greatest of all truths—that truth upon which the whole of their superstructures were reared. Although many foolish theories as to the origin of the world were indulged in by the Greeks, it does not appear that there were any books written expressly to combat the delusions of pretended Atheists. I do not remember to have met with in

Plato any laboured demonstrations to prove the Existence of The Absolute; on the contrary, his whole Philosophy appears based upon the idea that this truth would never be called in question. He does not appear to have contemplated the height to which modern Science has reached, else, no doubt he would have placed the great question in a light so clear, that no succeeding Philosopher could have called it in question. The whole Philosophy of Cicero was based upon the Existence of God. Not only so, but that Science of which he is still the acknowledged head, viz., Jurisprudence, (pronounced by competent authority to be the grandest triumph of human genius, and the most sublime of all the exact Sciences,) was reared on exactly the same foundation. Few of the Jurisconsults appear to have thought Scepticism or Atheism worthy of notice; and they have gone forward with their demonstrations, simply as if such sophisms had never perplexed the brains of the learned world. A very cursory examination into the foundations of Law, as defined by Montesquieu, Vattel, Grotius, Burlamaqui, Puffendorf, Blackstone, Erskine, and Henry Home, will at once shew, that their whole investigations have proceeded on the idea that there is a God who ruleth over all; and that He has placed within every man an ambassador who will faithfully record all that takes place. Further, they all affirm that it is only the Will of God, as interpreted by the Conscience, which makes human enactments to be binding; and also, that where Statute Law violates the plain dictates of the former, it is the duty of all men to set it at nought.

Of course it does not by any means necessarily follow, that because Jurisprudents have laid the foundations of their Science upon the Postulation of a God, therefore His Existence is established as an incontrovertible fact. The Science of Jurisprudence, which is said to be the accumulated product of the wise and the good of all the ages of the world, may possibly be reared upon a false foundation; but if so, it will be difficult to account for the stability of its principles —which have been subjected to every possible test—from the

fact that those principles have always been left untouched by the storms which have overthrown dynasties. Before a Sophist could controvert the postulation of a God, it would be incumbent upon him to overthrow, and level to the dust, all that polity which regulates, not only the internal governments of the world; but also those principles which regulate the intercourse between Nations, and which are known by the term Law of Nations, or International Law. Taking for granted the Existence of God may be somewhat objectionable in a logical point of view, as it partakes somewhat of the nature of an hypothesis, for the purposes of pure reason, it would be perhaps better at once to affirm it openly; and then deduce the necessary conclusions that flow from such a postulate, BECAUSE God rules over all. At the same time, it must be conceded that, not to speak of the Bible—many of the greatest works in Philosophy have started from this foundation. Plato's, to which I have already referred, the whole writings of Seneca, and Bishop Butler's Analogy of Religion, are all of this description.

III. The evidence afforded by the history of all nations, both in ancient and modern times, very unmistakeably points to the conclusion that the idea of a God is natural to the human mind. It is inconceivable that there could be any collusion, as has been averred, to bring about this result, or that it could have been handed down by any tradition. The remarkable diversity of names by which the Supreme Creator was known, excludes entirely the foundation of such a notion. The Greeks looked up to Jupiter or Zeus as the Supreme and Original Deity—from whom all the 'junior gods,' or 'made' Deities of the Stoics, were descended. He was alluded to by others, as the 'Universal Father of All,'—the 'Fountain of Godhead,'—'The Unconspicuous,'—the 'Architect,' or 'Artificer of the world,'—'the God of Gods, who alone is powerful,'—the 'Divine Intellect,' &c. All nations appear to have had their favourite terms to signify The Most High,

—the Supreme Numen who governs all things. Some of the hymns of the ancients, especially those of Orpheus, the great God-maker, are remarkable. 'Jupiter, who commands the thunder, was first and last; Jupiter is the head and the midst; all things were formed by Jupiter. . . . Jupiter is the foundation of the earth and starry heaven; Jupiter is the breath of all things; Jupiter is the ruler; Jupiter himself the origin of all. There is one power, one deity, one great ruler of all.' That hymn ascribed to Cleanthes, (a Philosopher, and latterly president of the Stoic school, who, although his occupation as a drawer of water left him so poor as not to be able to purchase paper, was still able to write many treatises,) is well worthy of notice. 'Hail, O Jupiter, most glorious of the immortals, invoked under many names, always most powerful, the first ruler of nature, whose law governs all things; hail, for to address thee is permitted to all mortals. For our race we have from thee; we mortals who creep upon the ground, receiving only the echo of thy voice. Wherefore I will celebrate thee, and will always sing thy power. All this universe rolling round the earth, obeys thee wherever thou guidest, and willingly is governed by thee. So vehement, so fiery, so immortal is the thunder which thou holdest subservient in thy unshaken hands; for by the stroke of this, all nature was rooted; by this thou directest the common reason which pervades all things, mixed with the greater and lesser luminaries; so great a king art thou, supreme through all; nor does any work take place without thee on the earth, nor in the etherial sky, nor in the sea, except what the bad perform in their own folly. But do thou, O Jupiter, giver of all blessings, dwelling in the clouds, ruler of the thunder, defend mortals from dismal misfortune, which dispel, O father, from the soul, and grant it to attain that judgment, trusting to which thou governest all things with justice; that, being honored, we may repay thee with honor, singing continually thy works, as becomes a mortal; since there is no greater meed to men or gods, than always to celebrate justly the universal law.'

To some it might appear as if Mythology and Idolatry militated against the doctrine of Monotheism. Orpheus, who instituted some three hundred and sixty Gods, was, notwithstanding, a worshipper of the one God. Mythology was convenient for the poets, to personify all the various sentiments they wished to describe; and in the same manner, as God himself was incorporeal, it was judged prudent to have His representation kept constantly in the physical eye of the worshipper. The outward images were only emblems of the Great Spirit; and thus, so far from forming any reason for doubting the Universality of the idea of God, Mythology and Idolatry prove the contrary. 'Among all nations,' says Kant, 'through the darkest polytheism glimmer some faint sparks of monotheism to which these idolaters have been led, not from reflection and profound thought, but by the study and natural progress of the common understanding.'

'There never was any nation,' says Cicero, 'so barbarous, nor any people in the world so savage and ferocious, as to be without some notion of Gods; many have wrong notions of the Gods, for that is the nature and ordinary consequence of bad customs, yet all allow that there is a certain divine nature and energy. Nor does this proceed from the conversation of men, or the agreement of philosophers; it is not an opinion established by institutions or laws; but, no doubt in every case, the universal consent of all nations is to be looked upon as the voice, or law of nature.' 'There is no nation,' says Seneca, 'so utterly lost to all things of Law and Morality, as not to believe the existence of God.' Although these affirmations have received ample confirmation from subsequent observation, yet they have frequently been denied. Even Cotta makes a feeble attempt to doubt them. 'I really believe,' he says, 'there are many people so savage that they have no thoughts of a Deity.'* Mr. Locke, in modern times, has taken the lead in the lofty employment of shewing that some races of savages have been found so debased as to

* De Natura Deorum, XXII.

have no idea of a God; or any word in their dialect to express a notion of one. This statement of his has, however, been found to have been erroneous; and his admiring editor, St. John, candidly admits this to be the case. Mungo Park, Dr. Livingston, and many others, uphold the Universality of belief in a God; but not one statement to the contrary has been produced which has stood the test of examination. Even the assertions of Cotta, Bayle, Bentley, and Locke, if proved, could not go for much. The fact of their having to resort to the most degraded savages and cannibals, for the sole confirmation of their statements, seems of itself a sufficient condemnation. Even if correct, their exclusive testimony is what any Philosopher should be ashamed to speak of. If, however, any doubt could remain on this head, it could not fail to have been removed by the abandonment of it by Von Holbach, whose verdict in such a case is finality.*

*System of Nature, P. II. C. XIII. I follow Lord Brougham in regard to the authorship of this work, as I could not presume to offer any opinion of my own in opposition to such an authority.

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CHAPTER SEVENTH.

INNATE IDEAS.

I. As the object of this, as well as the immediately preceding chapter, is to establish a strong *prima facie* case for the Existence of God; and as there is no intention here of prejudging the merits of the dispute, it is perfectly competent for me to tender myself and others as evidence as to the *probabilis causa*. This being the case, I now make solemn declaration, or affidavit, on soul and conscience, THAT THERE IS A GOD; that my knowledge proceeds from the observation of the Phenomena of my mind; that I am conscious of my own existence; and that, as I did not create myself, my existence is the express workmanship of an Intelligent Creator. Further, that I am as conscious of this truth, as that the sun shines, and diffuses heat and light over the globe; and that to doubt the truth of this question would be equivalent to doubting the fact of my own existence.

The great controversy regarding Innate Ideas in the soul of man admits of easy settlement, if the existence of *Mathematical Truth* be admitted. There have been men—(and by some strange perversity of language, called Philosophers too,)—who have denied even the truths of Mathematics; but these have been so few as to be unworthy of regard; and the only justification of any reference to them can merely be as illustrations of what the germs of some theories prove when carried to their legitimate conclusions. As all Mathematical Truths exist *as qualities in the mind*, and are the same in all times and circumstances, it is evident that there are some abstract notions in the soul; and the denial or overthrow of them is one and the same thing, as the total repu-

diation of Geometrical Truth. It is manifest from this, that the intuitive notion of God may be in the soul, and interwoven into its very nature; and to endeavour to destroy this, would be like unweaving the warp from the weft, and so destroying the whole texture of real existence.

II. Having emitted my own declaration, I shall now be more at ease to examine the testimony of others to the same effect. It is, however, indispensable for me to observe here, that if the doctrine of all Innate Ideas be overthrown, that of a knowledge of God being one of them, must perish among the number. It is contended by many that there is nothing but Matter in existence; if so, there can be neither a God nor a human soul. We are therefore bound to accept the doctrine of Intuitions, or be thrown upon Atheism. The fallaciousness of such sentiments as the denial of Innate Ideas will be found pointed out in the Appendix (Materialism). Of all the writers who have ever contended for Innate Ideas, Plato takes perhaps the highest place. His whole Philosophy is built thereupon; and he considers that, as certain principles reside in the soul of every member of the human family, the office of the Philosopher is only that of a midwife, bringing them forth to light. He contended that intelligence could only be predicated of the soul; and that nothing could exceed it in value. He maintained that this Reason, or Spiritual Existence, is, in its right state, Law; and further, that man's conduct being in conformity therewith, was necessary to make his life a shining ornament. If we are to believe Cicero, it was Epicurus who first promulgated the idea of the existence of the Gods being an impression which nature herself hath made on the minds of all men: 'and what nation or people,' asks Cicero, 'are there, who have not (without any learning) a natural idea, or prenotion of a Deity.' Epicurus hold this to be an antecedent conception of the fact in the mind, without which nothing can be understood, inquired after, or discoursed on. 'Here, then,' continues Cicero, 'you see the foundation of this ques-

tion clearly laid; for since it is the constant and universal opinion of mankind, independent of education, custom, or law, that there are Gods, it must necessarily follow that this knowledge is implanted in our minds, or rather innate in us; and in this we have the concurrence, not only of almost all philosophers, but likewise of the ignorant and illiterate. It must also be confessed that the point is established, that we have naturally this idea, as I said before, or prenotion of the existence of the Gods.' In another place Cicero affirms, 'All nations agree that there are Gods; the opinion is innate; and, as it were, engraven on our minds.' The Stoic Philosophers describe Innate Ideas as *Anticipated Opinions;* and it was from reason they derived the notions which have for their object the existence of the Gods. Jamblichus, who was a follower of Pythagoras, held that 'anteriorly to the use of all reason, the notion of the Gods is inspired by nature; and that we have even a sort of feeling of the divinity, preferable to the knowledge of him.' Malebranche, pronounced by D'Holbach the champion of Innate Ideas, is so clear about the Existence of God, that he does not appear even to have thought the question worthy of regard. He held that all things, Mind as well as Matter, demonstrated this. Bishop Wilkins, in his Principles and Duties of Natural Religion, concludes his argument on behalf of Theism thus:—'From what has been said, it will follow, that such things are evident by *natural light*, which men of a mature age, in the ordinary use of their faculties, with the common help of mutual Society, may know, and be sufficiently assured of, without the help of any Special Revelation. And when it is said that the notion of God is natural to the soul, the meaning of it is, that there is such a faculty in the soul of man, whereby, upon the use of reason, he can form within himself a settled notion of such a first, and supreme Being as is endowed with all possible perfection.' Mr. Tucker, in *The Light of Nature Pursued*, while contending that the existence of *something* proved necessarily a first cause, and while he held the argument of Universal Consent

to be a very weighty one,—still affirmed that 'our reason' has led us to the knowledge of a Governor over all. Kant, although severely condemned for Sensationalism by Ferrier, and by Hamilton for disputing the possibility of Philosophy —which, by the way, it was his main design to maintain— was, nevertheless, a keen supporter of Innate Ideas. 'In the sphere of moral belief, action is absolutely necessary; that is, I must act in accordance with the moral law in all points. The end is here incontrovertibly established; and there is only one condition possible, according to the best of my perception, under which this end can harmonize with all other ends, and so have practical validity—namely, the existence of a God, and of a future world. I know also, to a certainty, that no one can be acquainted with any other conditions which conduct to the same unity of ends, under the moral law. But since the moral precept is, at the same time, my maxim (as reason requires that it should be), I am irresistibly constrained to believe in the existence of God, and in a future life; and I am sure nothing can make me waver in this belief, since I should thereby overthrow my moral maxims; the renunciation of which would render me hateful in my own eyes.' Kant endeavours to draw a distinction between logical and moral certainty; and says, '*I am* morally certain, that is, my belief in God, and in another world, is so interwoven with my moral nature, that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me, as of losing the latter.' Burlamaqui, in his *Principles of Natural and Politic Law*, says, 'the existence of God, that is, of a first intelligent, and self-existent being, on whom all things depend as on their first cause, and who depends himself on no one; the existence, I say, of such a being, is one of those truths that shew themselves to us at the first glance.' After examining at some length, the truth of his statement, he draws therefrom the following important practical conclusion, stating the existence of '*a First Cause*, or of a *Creator*, as an incontestable truth, that *may henceforward serve for the basis of all our reasonings*.'

To enter fully upon the question of Innate Ideas, would be to go over the whole School of Scotch Philosophy, which, in one way or other, is identified with this question. One writer after another endeavours to shew more clearly the great distinguishing faculties of the soul—those native powers which are born with it, and which constitute its existence. One part of these discussions I shall merely allude to, because any lengthened notice would be out of place. Men have, in all ages of the world, affirmed, that there is in the soul a faculty which distinguishes between right and wrong, which is understood by the name of CONSCIENCE. Poets, Philosophers, and Juris-consults, have ever held it as the great terror of the wicked; and they have depicted remorse and its lashes as the greatest of all conceivable miseries which can afflict a human being. The denial of Innate Ideas in the soul would, of course, overthrow the notion of Conscience altogether, 'without which,' says Cicero, 'man would be detestable.' To those who wish to pursue this branch of the subject, the works of Hamilton,* Brown, Reid, Ferrier, Calderwood, &c., will afford ample scope for investigation, although my space does not permit extended reference to them, at least for the present. I shall only now refer to the judgment of Dugald Stewart, whose views will be at all times received with admiration. He says, 'that on the unity of design is founded the most solid arguments the light of reason supplies for the Unity of God; but the knowledge of the general fact on which that argument proceeds, is not confined to the student of Theology. It forces itself irresistibly on the thoughts of all who are familiarly conversant with the phenomena of either a material or moral world; and is recognised as a principle of reasoning, even by those who pay little or no attention to its most sublime and important application.' Speaking of intuitive evidence, (Outlines, p. 36,) he says, it mainly consists of three species, (1) 'The evidence of Axioms;

* Hamilton places Cousin among those 'who mount to the Absolute from the conditioned as a result.' Mill again speaks of him always as an Intuitionalist.

(2) The evidence of consciousness, of perception, and of memory; (3) The evidence of those fundamental laws of human belief, which form an essential part of our constitution; and of which our entire conviction is implied, not only in all speculative reasonings, but in all our conduct as active beings.' It is upon this platform he places the doctrine of a God—if not intuitive, 'the process of reasoning consists only of a single step; and the premises belong to that class of first principles which form an essential part of the human constitution.'

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

AXIOM: THERE IS A GREAT FIRST CAUSE.

Having seen in the last chapter, that the knowledge of the Existence of God is admitted by universal consent, and that it is part and parcel of the human mind; and, although these phenomena may not be sufficient for establishing the great doctrine of Theism, philosophically or logically, yet they will be abundantly sufficient for the object now contemplated, viz., the positing of an AXIOM, or the presentation of a PROPOSITION. This method of stating a great fact, does not of itself establish anything—a proposition proves nothing—neither is it pretended that it can make any fact clearer to the mind; but it enables any investigator into the nature of Truth to take up a position. It also places knowledge on a true and proper platform; and, above all things, by confronting it with its counter statement, by way of contrast, it forms a clear basis for the minor truths which are to be reared upon it. If this method does not enable the mind to perceive a fact more clearly, it has this great and most important advantage, that it at least lets us know what is opposed to it. Referring again to the matters treated of in my last two chapters, I submit that I am entirely justified in presenting here the statement of my great fundamental position, viz,—

AXIOM, OR PROPOSITION: THERE IS A GREAT FIRST CAUSE—THE UNCONDITIONED—GOD.

REMARKS.

I. The Proposition now laid down is the primary one of Theism, but it does not embrace the whole of that branch of Science, which includes likewise a demonstration of the ATTRIBUTES of The Infinite.

II. The Proposition itself being a Universal Truth, or Axiom, admits neither of direct demonstration, nor of being proved *à posteriori*. First truths are so woven into the texture of the mind, that their existence can only be rendered dubious by any attempts to place them on a surer foundation.

III. The proposition, That there is a Great First Cause, places that Truth on the same platform as a Mathematical Axiom or demonstration—the greatest of all certitudes whicIf it is possible to conceive of. The knowledge of the Existence of God is pure,—like the first truths of Geometry which exist in the mind itself, separate and distinct from all external phenomena; and we cannot repudiate them without, at the same time, denying our own existence.

IV. The Existence of God being the greatest of all Truths in the Universe, it follows, that Philosophy, as the Science which specially treats of that great Truth, must be the most important and elevated of all the Sciences. God being the First Cause, all other Causes must be subordinate to that Cause. God being Himself the First Truth in the Universe, all other Truths must be Secondary. The claim put forth by Physicists, that they have arrived at certain *ultimate facts* of nature, is necessarily absurd. The Metaphysician declares there can be only one 'ultimate fact' in nature, or in infinity—God. All the boasted discoveries in Astronomy, Geology, &c., possess only a subordinate and secondary or relative value to this grand fact. Not only so; it is alone by reason of this Truth that they can have any meaning; and their value, whatever it may be, is only conceivable in proportion as it subserves the advancement of this, the basis of all other Truths. Physical or Secondary Science can be of no value to mankind, unless it recognise The Unconditioned as its basis. If it ignore or repudiate this foundation, it cannot fail to be injurious to the human race. However, if prosecuted earnestly and successfully, it will assuredly lead the mind upwards, to adore its Creator and Preserver. The illustrious Newton

affirmed, that when Inductive Science completed its course of experiment, it would arrive at the idea of God. One thing is certain, that so long as man is Conditioned, it is his duty at all times, and in every branch of his investigations into the laws of his existence, to recognise his true position, and his entire subjection, to The Unconditioned. Should he neglect to do so, he will violate the fundamental regulations of his nature, and thus subject himself to misery. That there is a Great First Cause, must, then, be the key to unlock the flood-gates of all the Sciences, Mental or Physical;—and the oftener this Truth is brought before the mind, the faster will ignorance and superstition vanish away. 'All true reasoning,' says Cicero, 'must start from a right foundation.' In order to arrive at sound conclusions, it is indispensable that we start from truthful premises, as other than these must inevitably lead to fallacious consequences.

V. The stating of God's Existence in an Axiomatic form, does not admit of any evidence being adduced to prove it so satisfactorily as might be desired by many who have followed the tendencies of some of our modern schools of thought. It has not here been attempted to prove how Mind and Matter can exist at all, nor how they can be united to each other. Nothing has been done to explain how a Cause can exist without a Cause; no effort has been made to reply to the very profound question, What is Being? Or, How can the mind perceive phenomena? Yet it cannot be denied that these, and many other pregnant questions, are supposed to require an answer, ere the Existence of God can be fully recognised by many of the devotees to high thought. It would be useless to attempt a denial, or to slight the importance of those difficulties; but as they cannot be logically considered here, they fall to be discussed, if discussed at all, under the *Counter Proposition*, which will be found laid down in a succeeding chapter; and to which, enquirers on these points are invited to refer.

VI. A Proposition has been defined as a Scientific Judgment, and its use above is in accordance with that description. In a great many of the affairs that engross our attention in the world we can only reach opinions, and these of greater or less probability. Superstition and vague conjecture still occupy considerable territory in the Mental hemisphere; but as accurate observation progresses, their boundary lines will recede. In regard to many events in History, it is probable we may never be able to arrive at satisfactory conclusions; still, notwithstanding such uncertainties, it is undoubtedly the case, that there are multitudes of facts, so satisfactorily established, that they are at once adopted as settled *judgments;* and no man offers any *opinion* as to their falsity or truthfulness. We know that Julius Cæsar lived, and died by the hand of an assassin. We know there was a Battle of Waterloo. It would be looked upon as a piece of unpardonable impertinence for any one to offer an opinion now as to the fact of the earth's revolving round the sun. No one with any respect to his character as a man of intelligence would presume to deny the law of gravitation. Every one *knows* that two multiplied by two are equal to four; and that a whole is greater than a part. Science, then, is another word for certainty; it is the knowledge of certain principles; these principles being established by demonstration, or by the observation of facts. In either case, it is wholly opposed to anything indefinite, vague, or uncertain. It rejects with disdain all conjectures, however probable; and it must, as a necessity of its existence, have a stable foundation to rest upon: it contemplates things true and divine, which are not subject to opinion. Science is either first principles, or it must unfailingly rest upon them.

In laying down the proposition—There is a God—it is done as a great truth of Science; for Axiomatic truths are the most secure known to Mathematicians, Metaphysicians, or Logicians—that is when the contrary involves a manifest absurdity. My proposition necessarily excludes all BELIEF

in the Existence of the Unconditioned. This form of argumentation is opposed to that of the Academics—with whom it was a rule, that no question should be definitely decided. My problem, if such it can be called, demands an immediate solution; for without that, it is impossible to proceed a single step, in the process of ratiocination. Scientific truth is necessarily severe, and courts not even the aid of eloquence, to enforce her dictates. Her empire is one of right; and she seeks not to use the gentle arts of persuasion to render her claims more popular. She trusts her case to her own indefeasible rights; which require only to be once understood, to be admitted by all. It is upon this foundation that all our Philosophy must rest—as well as all our religious knowledge. It is only by making the fact of God's Existence the grand basis of all our reasonings, that we can know anything of TRUTH. It is by recognising THE Canon of Pure Reason we can be able to arrive at any right conclusion regarding ourselves;—and relatively of those Laws, by the observance of which alone, it is possible to avoid misery, and to attain the substance, and not the shadow, of true Civilization.

CHAPTER NINTH.

SCEPTICISM.

I. The various meanings that are attached to the term Scepticism render a definition of it indispensable. Like many other words, its use by one party has an entirely different signification from that by another. In its widest sense, Scepticism may be said to be the principles of those who affect to doubt the existence of everything—God, man, and the outward world. This is called Universal Scepticism. With others, the term means, the doctrines of those who doubt the truthfulness of Christianity, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, or the Miracles. Sometimes those who are not able to see the evidence adduced, as sufficient to prove the existence of Special Interventions of Providence, are called Sceptics. But Scepticism, in connection with any work on the Existence of God, will readily be understood as referring —not to the *denial* of that truth, but to the *doubting* of it. Scepticism is frequently used as synonymous with the term Atheism; but, although there may, in reality, be little difference, yet logically the distinction must be kept up.

II. As to the first meaning referred to, Universal Scepticism, it is so very ridiculous, that the wonder is, that it could ever have entered into the brain of any rational being. David Hume was the great representative of this doctrine, and, 'he aimed at proving, not that nothing was known; but that nothing could be known; from the structure of the understanding to demonstrate, that we are doomed for ever to dwell in absolute and universal ignorance.' 'Universal Scepticism,' continues Mackintosh, 'involves a

contradiction in terms. *It is a belief that there can be no belief.*' Any arguments to controvert a notion so perverse, and let me add irrational, would be out of place. What is known—in Germany at least—as the Science of Doubt, is simply the Philosophy of Nonsense. A man who commenced an argument by basing his reasonings on the *negation* of his own existence, would be simply a fool! How could we speak, or reason, with a man, or listen to his statements, if he had no existence?

III. At first sight, this kind of Scepticism might look, from its manifest absurdity, as harmless; but, as has been often stated above, no error can be harmless: it cannot exist without producing evil. And no doubt Universal Scepticism prepares the way for a denial of the Existence of God. Both kinds of it—universal and particular—are in their very nature opposed to the spread of Truth; and nothing could be more hostile to the existence of either, than true Science. The Sceptic is, then, the natural enemy of all knowledge—for where knowledge advances, his occupation is gone. Scepticism is, by its own confession, the foe, not of Metaphysics only, but of Astronomy, Optics, and all the other Sciences and Arts. The Sceptic lays his foundation-stone upon doubt—upon uncertainty—than which, as we have seen in our last chapter, nothing can be more antagonistic to Science, which is just another name for certainty. In the present state of the world, there is a great amount of ignorance regarding even the truths of Physical Science; but our pioneers are at work in all directions, and are adding store to store, and widening the domain of knowledge. The Sceptic, if he were consistent with his own principles, would resolutely oppose all such attempts, and would keep the world in as great ignorance as ever.

IV. Referring to the Proposition laid down in my last chapter, I have now to submit, that as such, it demands an unambiguous reply. It proclaims the great Scientific truth,

That there is a God; and it cannot admit of an uncertain or dubious construction. It is so framed as to exclude all *belief* on the one hand, and all *doubt* on the other. It does not ask patronage from supposed friends, and it is too serious to be trifled with on the shadowy pretence of a mere quibbler, whose only object is to perplex and confound. God *exists*, or He does *not* exist. A *tertium quid* in the circumstances is an impossibility.

V. The proposition, That there is a God, is presented as the primary truth of the universe—as the primal canon or datum of all pure reason—and as the fundamental premise of all thought. The abnegation of this premise amounts to a repudiation of it; so the Sceptic, who pretends to rear a system of Philosophy merely *upon a doubt*, virtually and logically negatives the Existence of the Unconditioned. In reality, then, the Sophist, while affecting *not to deny that truth*, has all along been aiding and abetting the cause of Atheism. Under a specious pretext of being guided by true reason, he has been all the while violating its first principles, and using his utmost efforts, silently but insidiously, to banish from the earth every spark of truth, and every trace of civilization.

VI. By the laws of Pure Logic, or the principles of all reasoning, (as established by the Greeks, and all subsequent philosophers,) *no proposition* is capable of being *doubted*. There is, I hesitate not to say, nothing in any Science clearer or truer than this—One or other of two contending propositions must, by strict necessity, be true—both cannot. By the law of Excluded Middle, or the principle of contradiction, there can be no medium. This being the case, the Proposition, That there is a God, at once extinguishes the *possibility* of Scepticism,—for it is reduced to a plain absurdity. It is bound either to recognize the Existence of the Unconditioned, or to maintain the counter proposition—There is no First

Cause. In either case it condemns itself, and becomes its own executioner. Scepticism is apodictically overthrown.

Here, then, is an exemplification of the advantage of the Metaphysical method of treating Theism as a subject of Pure Reason, and of scientific knowledge. By means of the Proposition stated in last chapter, the Sceptic and the Positivist, who boast that they are the great lights of reason, are found to become its open enemies,—they can only maintain their ground in open violation of all the rules of reasoning. Let Theism once occupy its own position, and the pseudo-philanthropist—the quack who pretends to be the 'reasoner'—the interpreter, forsooth! of the language of nature—will have to retire to his own den; his voice can only be heard in the dark, like that of the night owl, whose miserable screech I heard only a few minutes ago. Scepticism as to the Existence of God, or the flimsy pretext of seeking after more proof of that fact, is now *logically* pronounced an absurdity,—a thing philosophically inconceivable. In a short time it will be banished from the light of day; and should it exist at all, it will only be found in the company of such a depraved crew as will, by their conduct, afford a striking example of its malign perversity, and of its own utter worthlessness.

CHAPTER TENTH.

ATHEISM.—THERE IS NO GREAT FIRST CAUSE.

The observations that have just been made regarding the nature of Propositions render my present task all the lighter. It is only possible to meet a proposition with one counter to it; therefore those who are not satisfied with the plain Universal Truth, There is a Great First Cause, have no resource but to give it a negative, and make the affirmation, THERE IS NOT A GREAT FIRST CAUSE. As this is the only way of ascertaining the truth on such an important subject, there appears no good reason why the position should not be examined.

Many, I fear, will be disposed to affirm that I should have brought forward better evidence or demonstration to support my First Proposition, but now the reason is obvious why such was incompetent,—no support was required. The truth That there is a God, has never been openly denied; and until this is done, it appears unnecessary to substantiate the proposition by any demonstration. Let me offer an illustration. All men know that there is a sun: until some Astronomer denied this, it would be the height of folly to write learned treatises proving that this luminary exists in the firmament of heaven. It is one of the advantages, or disadvantages, of this method of investigation, that it can deal only with things as they *are*—with positive assertions which have a definite meaning. This, then, is logically the only position the Sceptic can take up; he is bound to do so by the laws of reasoning, at once to admit the full truth of the affirmative proposition, There is a God, or openly deny it. His demand for proof—more proof—can be replied to, but only here, so that it may be

exactly known what it is that is wanted *to be proved.* This, too, is the place for the Philosopher who, before recognising God, has *difficulties* to overcome regarding His nature and being—the connection of Mind with Matter—the existence of Moral Evil, &c., &c. By stating these objections under the counter proposition, he will himself derive great advantage, as his scruples, conscientious as they may be, will be placed in the position where they can be met and investigated to his satisfaction. Formally, then, all discussion upon the counter proposition appears to be incompetent, simply because there is not, nor was there ever, a Philosophical scheme of Atheism propounded to the world.* It does not follow from this, that there never will be. Some depraved intelligence—some stricken philosopher—may yet astonish the world with a great discovery, that, There is no Deity; but when he does so, it will be time enough to meet him. At present, the Atheist is a Metaphysical myth, an absolute non-entity; and against non-entities it is difficult to wage a successful warfare. There is, no doubt, much current Philosophy that 'bottoms' on the affirmation,—that There is not a God; but as Atheism cannot appear in its own proper form, it is the peculiar use of Metaphysics to pull aside the veil, and let it be seen what its counterfeit is in reality,—in its native deformity.

REMARKS.

I. The definition now given of Atheism—That there is no First Cause, is the only true one, in a logical point of view. None other is possible in the circumstances. This term has, however, had, in all ages, and in all countries, various significations. Socrates was charged with it for teaching Monotheism; in Rome, he was accounted an Atheist who denied the Special Providences of the Gods, or the subaltern Deities; and in this sense, the epithet is not uncommon in the present

* Mr. Gillespie, it appears, discovered in a back cellar some Atheistical clubs; and many real Atheists may exist in the present day; but with these it is not the province of a Philosopher to deal, as they have no *locus standi.*

day. Galileo was excommunicated as an Atheist, for maintaining the existence of the antipodes; and that the earth revolved round the sun. Any one who wishes to investigate into the nature of ancient Atheisms, need only look into Cudworth's *Intellectual System*; where he will find descriptions of them that are now all but unknown. That learned author is said to have conjured up so many ancient dreamers from their forgotten graves, that he was unable to get them quietly reconciled to return. The adjective *Atheistic* will admit of much wider application; and in designating by it the current system of Utilitarianism and other theories that abnegate the Existence of God, its adoption is not only justifiable; but until some better term is introduced, almost indispensable.

II. It must be observed here, that the definition given above, will not correspond with the meaning usually attached to the term. The Greeks were most jealous of their Theism; and not overlooking the case of Socrates, just alluded to, a reference to the lives of Aristotle, Stilpo, Bion, and others, will shew how jealously their religious knowledge was guarded. Theodorus, surnamed the Atheist, was banished for his opinions. Protagoras affirmed that he was not able to know to a certainty, whether there were Gods or not. Bion—an impudent fellow—used to deny that there were Gods at all; but when death threatened him, he changed his ideas. Diogenes Laertius in his epigram on him says,

> 'Fool that he was, who thought
> To win the Gods to come into existence
> Whenever he might think he wanted them.'

Diagoras was said to have really denied the existence of the Gods; but it is more likely it was their Special Providences that he doubted. His scepticism arose from seeing a fellow call the Gods to witness his perjury, without being immediately struck down. Atheism is generally believed to have been largely developed in France, previous to the Revolution

of last Century; but that kind of it will not answer the proper definition given above, as certainly Von Holbach, its authorised exponent, did not attempt to deny the existence of the Deity. The great confusion in the application of the term Atheism, necessitated a definition of it, in order to its scientific investigation.

III. In treating of Theism, it was affirmed, that it supplied the fundamental premise of all true reasonings;—that it afforded a firm foundation for Religion, Morality, and Social Science;—and so became of the utmost value to mankind. But no advantage of any kind whatever, can be held out to justify the promulgation of Atheism;—its votaries, as has been well observed, play for nothing; and if the expression could be allowed, the prizes are all blanks. The Theist maintains, that by acknowledging God as the Source of ALL TRUTH, and His Law as the standard of all duty, men can enjoy happiness. But the Atheist, if such there ever was, could only promise anguish and misery, as the fruits of his Philosophy; and that, if followed out to its legitimate conclusion, it would overthrow all order in the world, and introduce universal anarchy and desolation. The *high mission* of Atheism is, then, to increase with all its might, crime and misery; and it only wants sufficient power to convert our globe into a pandemonium. Epictetus is said to have observed that the idea of God was good, even if not true; and the same sentiment is attributed to another ancient writer. Cudworth remarks, 'that it is the interest of none that there should be no God; but only of such wretched persons as have abandoned their first, and only true interest of being good, and desperately resolved upon ways of wickedness.'

Such is the notion of Atheism, as it appears when subjected to the test of true reasoning. Whether it can be beneficial to mankind in a diluted form, or when distributed under the specious disguise of Science, Philosophy, and Reason, is what hardly admits of disputation.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

CONCLUSION.

I. Although no argument against Atheism could perhaps be offered in the last chapter, it may not be amiss to observe here, that the counter proposition itself implies a contradiction in terms; for either there *is* a Great First Cause, or there could be no Cause at all. A secondary first cause is simply inconceivable. If we postulate the existence of the Conditioned, it is necessary to affirm, either that he created himself, or that he was created by another; and in this latter case, the laws or conditions of his existence must necessarily have been prescribed. Before the counter-proposition could be proved, the Conditioned would require to become the Unconditioned,—which is likewise an absurdity as great as it is impossible, as first he would require to be Omniscient and Omnipresent. In fine, the primal doctrine of Theism is established by what is known as INDIRECT DEMONSTRATION. When the contrary of any proposition is capable of being reduced to an absurdity—when there is a manifest 'destructive dilemma' involved—then the Apological Demonstration is as strong as the direct. The Existence of God can therefore by this method be Mathematically demonstrated.

II. In *reality*, then, although there was no occasion for making the observation while the counter proposition was under discussion, Atheism becomes logically extinct. As was already stated, it is possible that some debased, mad philosopher might adopt the affirmation, *There is no God;* but the merest tyro in logic could at once apply the *Reductio*

ad impossibile, and so finish the dispute. Scepticism and Atheism, then, only require to be logically brought face to face with truth, in order to their entire annihilation. Ignorance of Metaphysics, or of Logic, alone can allow them to exist at all.

III. Although no evidence has been here adduced to prove the Existence of God, it will be seen that the doctrine is indirectly placed on the securest footing it is possible to imagine,—that is, the idea of anything contrary to it is shown to be contradictory. So, Theism must now be allowed to proceed on her course, and accomplish her lofty mission unchallenged, and, I may add, without fear of contradiction, *unchallengeable*. By this process of reasoning, the affirmation, That there is a Great First cause, is shown to possess all the certitude of the nine geometrical axioms. These truths are so manifest, that, although no *direct proof* can be brought to bear upon them, their truthfulness can be made apparent by shewing their contraries to be absurdities. That there is a God, then, is as logically certain as that two and two make four, or that two straight lines will not enclose a space.

IV. Axioms or Propositions, in themselves, prove nothing; but they are affirmations from which innumerable other statements can be deduced, and proved. This, then, is the case with the main affirmation of this treatise; it may, of itself, prove nothing; yet, by its truthfulness being incapable of doubt or denial, an infinite number of truths can be deduced from it. As has been shewn, men have, in all ages, acknowledged the Existence of God; now, however, *that* Truth is presented in a truly LOGICAL form—ready for use in the great workshop of ratiocination, and rendered serviceable for the great purposes of life. That there is a God, may now form the predicate of any syllogism as scientifically as that the four sides of a square must be equal. As no demonstration is competent while doubt remains,—so here, all *doubt* as to

the Existence of God is thrown aside, as well as all *belief* on the other hand. Certainties alone can form the basework of demonstration. Formerly, Philosophers, Theologians, and Jurists, based their ratiocinations on a conjecture, *a petitio principii*, postulation, or hypothesis; but their fabric was liable to be overthrown by a Sceptic or Sophist, doubting or denying their original premise; now, they may proceed without danger of attack from either, as the Existence of God is placed beyond the *possibility* of rational doubt or denial. The fundamental predicate of Theism *compels universal recognition*. It is now safely placed beyond the reach of injury—from all the malign intentions of the Atheist or Sophist, as well as from the ill-considered support of its friends, whose efforts have been too often an exemplification of zeal without knowledge.

V. A universal and indisputable datum having been obtained for all possible questions affecting man, considered either as an individual, or as a member of the body politic, the great fundamental questions of Religion,—of Time and Eternity, may henceforth be determined by INFALLIBLE DEMONSTRATION. It is only necessary to start from this predicate in order finally to set at rest the principles of Moral Science;—the settlement of the great controversy regarding Free Will and Fore-ordination, (which has perplexed the world for three thousand years);—and to place beyond cavil the Institutes of Social Science, regarding which there now exist so many conflicting opinions. Many of the disputes that at present hinder the advancement of Christianity, may now be definitely and conclusively pronounced upon, with as much certitude, as any of the ordinary problems in Astronomy or Mechanical Science.

VI. The Axiom, There is a God, is the only possible basis for all correct thinking;—that is, for man as a reasonable and accountable intelligence. What are usually denominated the 'Laws of Thought,' by writers on Logic, are only more *forms* of ratiocination, or *methods* of stating arguments.

They have nothing more to do with the true basis of the Laws of Thought, than have any of the rules of Grammar;—both possess only a negative value;—they are the bottles, not the wine, and should never be placed in competition therewith. They stand in the same relationship as do the husks to the wheat. The Will of the Unconditioned is the only possible standard of Duty for the Conditioned—the only conceivable Law of all Thought.

VII. It has been frequently stated above, that the Existence of God has never been openly denied. But *indirectly* this has been but too frequently done. The Materialist may say that he believes in God; but his *philosophy* proves the contrary; for it totally repudiates the notion of an Intelligent Governor of the Universe. The Fatalist often affirms, there is a God; but, as Hamilton observes, Fatalism and Atheism are convertible terms. It would be an advantage of no ordinary degree, to have this secondary kind of Atheism defined;* for although it may theoretically admit that there is a God, yet it *practically gives a negative to that great truth.* It supersedes the wisdom and authority of the Unconditioned, by the whimsical and capricious judgments of man. In times of peace a merchant may dispose of fire-arms and other munitions of war to a foreign power; but in war such transactions are forbidden, and *declared* to be illegal, and the act *construed* into treason. A criminal may affirm that he is not a thief, although he was seen pocket-picking; yet the law looks to the *fact*, rather than to the assertion. Clarke holds one to be an Atheist who denies the *Attributes* of Deity; and many similar instances will suggest themselves to the student. There being a God, it follows, as an absolute and undeniable certainty, that *His* Will is the *only possible* rule of duty and obligation to the conditioned; and nothing can be clearer than this, that the substitution of any

* One in authority, who took the pains of going through my MS., speaks of this as an 'ultimate Atheism.'

other theory involves, logically, a denial of the Existence of the Unconditioned. Among the many philosophical systems that stand thus condemned as violations of the necessary postulation of all thought, may be enumerated, the theory of Sympathy, so ingeniously argued out by Adam Smith; the old system of Expediency, so ably combated by Cicero, and latterly expounded by Jeremy Bentham; the Materialistic absurdities of the Phrenologists (or, more correctly, Craniologists) who still struggle for a feeble existence, under the banner of Combe.

VIII. All these systems, as I have elsewhere observed, present the features of an unmistakable family likeness, and may be all taken as the legitimate offspring of Protagoras, who taught, that 'man is the measure of all things; of those things that exist as he is; and of those things which do not exist as he is not.' Perhaps the most prevalent type of Philosophy, based upon the abnegation of a Great First Cause, is that of Utility;—the fallaciousness of which, was likewise ably exposed by the illustrious Roman Orator, Philosopher, and Patriot, above referred to. Archdeacon Paley brought it out in a new dress towards the end of last century; and it has retained in its defence in our time, the powerful advocacy of Mr. John Stuart Mill. To a mere casual observer, Utility, presenting as it does a very good *test* of the soundness of a theory, is apt to look plausible enough; but it violates the very first principles of Metaphysics; and so, of necessity, is illogical and unsound. The recognition of a Great First Cause, and the demolition of Mr. Mill's finely drawn Sophisms on Utilitarianism, are one and the same thing. Before that writer could establish the soundness of his reasonings, he would require to traverse Infinity, and come back with the information, that there is no God in the boundless range of the Universe itself. Atheism and Utilitarianism stand related to each other as cause and effect. The annihilation of the former, carries with it, as a logical sequence, the utter extinction of the latter. 'There can be no good end,'

says Cicero, 'to reasonings based on false foundations.' The Existence of God being logically stated, involves then directly, or by a chain of faultless demonstrations, the entire overthrow of many Sophisms now taught as Philosophy and Social Science.

IX. It may not be improper here to indicate the method I have already adopted, in going forward with Demonstrations which form a cycle of Mental Science from the universal postulate of Pure Reason, viz., 1st, Attributes, deducible from the said Postulation,—2d, The method of Intellectual government of the Universe, demonstrated from the Attributes,—3d, The relationship of the Conditioned to the Unconditioned; or more plainly, the Philosophy of the Human Mind,—and lastly, the laws by which the Conditioned are bound to each other, or the Institutes of Social Science.*

X. Before concluding 'The Philosophy of the Unconditioned,' a few observations seem called for, to exhibit the relationship in which my postulation stands in reference to certain of the speculations in Metaphysics, which have of late years engaged so much attention. The name of Sir William Hamilton will at once suggest itself, as the greatest representative of modern thought, in connection with the Infinite, at least in Britain, in the present day. As I have already noticed, Sir William was an illustrious example of the Scottish School of Thought;—but that he has wandered far aside from the paths of his fathers, whether they were right or not, will not be controverted. Dr. Calderwood was the first to attack the fallacies of our modern Pythagoras; and, as every one knows, Mr. John Stuart Mill has followed—though I think at some little distance, in the same wake. The last named writer has criticised Hamilton's philosophy and standing so fully, and in so masterly a manner, that nothing is now left to be re-

* Corresponding to Books I. II. III. IV. of 'The Laws of Thought.'

marked upon. Mr. Mill honorably notices the immense erudition of the departed Philosopher; but justly remarks, that his enormous appetite for the consumption of mental food left little time for digestion, or for the development of original thought. It was a shrewd observation made by a Greek Philosopher, 'that abundant learning does not form the mind;' and the truth of this statement has been confirmed by many subsequent examples. For a considerable time, the followers of our modern Pythagoras seemed to think it a sufficient vindication of any statement in Metaphysics, that 'he himself' said it. Dr. Mansel* has come forward as the disciple and editor of his idol; but after what he too has suffered at the hands of Mr. Mill, we may now hope to hear less of master, and, we may pray, of his willing scholar, R. I. P. The first doctrine of Hamilton which naturally comes to be confronted with the proposition, That there is a God, is that one which may be fairly stated thus:—THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE HAS NO ATTRIBUTES. The words used by Hamilton which justify the terms of the proposition, are, that our notions of the Unconditioned are only a 'fasciculus of negations.' This sentence seems to be an affected piece of barbarous jargon; and, if I understand it properly, it would read, when translated into plain English, that God is to us, 'a little bundle of denials.' Men have, in all ages, affirmed, that God is Good, Just, &c.; but, according to modern speculations of the German, but certainly not of the Scottish, School, these attributes are but mere phantasies of the imagination. What I have seen of the substance of Hamilton's philosophy, accords with this interpretation; for he makes no attempt to enlighten us as to the attributes, or relationships of the Almighty. A phrase somewhat similar to the one above alluded to, occurs in Hamilton's writings, when he says, that the Existence of God is the 'negation of nonentity.' Appendix to Lectures, p. 529. If Hamilton understood what he wished to be at, which I think is very

* Limits of Religious Thought.

problematical, he appears to have been desirous of promulgating the notion, that, although there may be an abstraction which is called God; yet, as that abstraction is without a nature or attributes, it has no real existence; in other words, there is no God. Calderwood charged Hamilton's speculations with Pantheism; and as the veil separating it from Atheism is so thin as to be imperceptible, it does not appear that there is much room for quarreling about the word used. I presume Dr. Calderwood would not deny that Pantheism and Atheism are all but convertible terms.

In order to place the question on as clear a footing as possible, I shall meet Hamilton's supposed proposition by a counter one, or an axiom—EVERYTHING THAT EXISTS HAS ATTRIBUTES; and by parity of reason, Nothing only possesses no attributes.* The corollary from my proposition being, that as God exists, He has attributes. It will be seen at once, then, that either my apprehension of Hamilton's views is very erroneous; or that his theories lead infallibly, and with hardly an intermediate step, to Atheism. 'The doctrine of Ockham,' says Mackintosh, 'which by necessary implication refuses moral attributes to the Deity, and contradicts the existence of a moral government, is practically equivalent to Atheism.'

XI. There is another gross fallacy of Hamilton, that aims a deadly blow at the whole fabric of Theism. Like the error to which I have just adverted, it is more difficult to be correctly defined, than entirely demolished. In fact, Sir William being much more a polemic than a connected thinker,† is so contradictory and so abstruse, that the whole strength of his sophisms lies in big words. His Philosophy of the Conditioned, &c., reminds me very much of the Glamis

* See Cudworth's Intellectual System, and Father Malebranche's Search after Truth.

† Mill's Examination, p. 569.

definition of Metaphysics.* There is an anecdote told of the late Daniel O'Connell, who undertook to silence the noisiest oracle of Billinsgate, and this he accomplished by an artillery of Mathematical terms, which the virago could not understand. This, then, was Hamilton's forte; and without his horrid vocabulary, he would, in the present controversy, have been like Samson shorn of his locks. Before venturing to state his doctrine in a logical form, I shall endeavour to present an idea of it, in as plain language as I can. While theoretically admitting the existence of a God, he denied that men could attain to any knowledge of the divine nature. 'We must believe in the infinity of God; but the infinite God cannot by us, in the present limitation of our faculties, be comprehended or conceived.' . . . 'To say that the infinite can be thought, but only inadequately thought, is a contradiction *in adjecto*; it is the same as saying that the infinite can be known, but only as finite.' Lecture xxxviii. To the same effect, Mansel says, 'the celebrated article of Sir William Hamilton on the Philosophy of the Unconditioned, contains the key to the understanding, and appreciation of nearly the whole body of modern German speculation. His great principle, that the Unconditioned is incognisable and inconceivable, its notion being only the negative of the Conditioned, which last alone can only be positively known or conceived, has suggested the principal part of the enquiries in the present work.' Limits of Religious Thought, p. xliv. Taking, then, the words of Hamilton, as well as of his pupil, and at the same time the common understanding of Hamiltonianism, it may, I submit, be described under the Proposition—THAT MAN CANNOT ATTAIN ANY KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

It will be seen at once, that this definition is quite consistent with the one hazarded above; for if the Deity be a little bundle of nothings, it would be exceedingly difficult to predicate anything concerning His nature. If we gently

* 'Twa folk disputin' thegither; he that's listenin' disna ken what the ither says, and disna ken what he means himsel'—that's Metaphysics.'—Fleming's Vocab. of Philosophy.

push aside a jingling equivocation that Hamilton makes use of, his involved abstraction will appear as a very small affair. The fallacy contained in his argument is this—that because we cannot comprehend God,* therefore, we cannot know anything concerning Him. 'That we cannot understand God; that His ways are not our ways; that we cannot scrutinize or judge His counsels—propositions which, in a reasonable sense of the terms, could not be denied by any Theist—have often been tendered as reasons why we may assert any absurdities and any moral monstrosities concerning God, and call them Goodness and Wisdom.'† Although I may be corrected, yet I may remark, that there is only one known philosopher who takes the extreme view which is combated by Hamilton and Mansel. I do not think such an absurd notion is entertained by any writer of the present age; and therefore it appears, that both of these philosophers are only slaying a phantom of their own imaginations. Until some more dreamers come forward to shew that they know the arcana of the Almighty, and can describe to a nicety His essence, and the Infinity of His Attributes, this piece of German Mysticism may be safely placed on the shelf, there to remain until there be some slight occasion for its use. 'My opinion of this doctrine,' says Mr. Mill, 'in whatever way presented, is, that it is simply the most morally pernicious doctrine now current; and that the question it involves is, beyond all others which now engage speculative minds, the decisive one between moral good and evil for the Christian World.'

Perhaps it would be necessary here to distinguish what is affirmed concerning the *Moral* Attributes of the Deity, as they are most particularly objected to, as being knowable by the Hamiltonians. Their affirmation is, that we can entertain no conception whatever regarding the Justice or Holiness

* See Cudworth on Apprehenders and Comprehenders; and Trench on the Study of Words.

† Mill's Examination, p. 90.

of God; or what is to the same effect, that what we know as Justice and Holiness, have no possible relationship or resemblance, in any degree, to the Justice and Holiness of the Supreme Creator. 'Here, then,' says Mr. Mill, 'I take my stand on the acknowledged principles of logic and morality, that when we mean different things we have no right to call them by the same name, and to apply to them the same predicates, moral and intellectual. Language has no meaning for the words Just, Merciful, and Benevolent, save that in which we predicate them of our fellow creatures; and unless that is what we intend to express by them, we have no business to employ the words. If, in affirming them of God, we do not mean to affirm these very qualities, differing only as greater in degree, we are neither philosophically nor morally entitled to affirm them at all. . . . To say that God's goodness may be different in kind from man's goodness, what is it but saying, with a slight change of phraseology, that God may possibly not be good? To assert in words what we do not think in meaning, is as suitable a definition as can be given of a moral falsehood. . . . Unless I believe God to possess the same moral attributes which I find, in however inferior a degree, in a good man, what ground of assurance have I of God's veracity? All trust in a Revelation presupposes a conviction that God's Attributes are the same, in all but degree, with the best human attributes.'*

A very slight examination of the notion Mr. Mill so triumphantly combats, should convince any candid enquirer that he is right. Let me allude to the sin of Blasphemy, which is punishable as a crime at common law. Were a man irrationally to affirm that God was a liar or unholy, it would not be a sufficient justification for the criminal to aver that the words did not convey the sense they usually do, but something entirely the reverse. I am quite aware that, in many

* While cordially approving of the doctrine of Mill in opposition to the Mystics, I cannot approve of the language he uses in the next paragraph, p. 103. It seems, besides being unjustifiably strong, to be totally uncalled for.

cases, the process of spiritualising terms, so as to render them at all times useful to the purpose in hand, is a most convenient one; but, as Philosophers use—perhaps not so frequently as they ought to do—*definitions*, they are excluded from such advantages, as some others possess in this respect. As Jurisprudence, too, is an accurate Science, it would not do for the blasphemer to plead at the bar, that, in calling God a liar, he meant to worship Him as a God of Infinite Truth.

But not only is the old fallacious and mischievous notion of the Divine Attributes being unknowable theoretically absurd: it is submitted that there is evidence in existence to shew that some of the Attributes of the Almighty have become *known*—that is, in a strictly logical and exact sense. Before Dr. Mansel could prove his case, he would require to overthrow the Demonstrations which have been exhibited of certain Moral Attributes of the Unconditioned. Thus, Dr. Samuel Clarke, a thinker whom neither Hamilton nor his pupil could afford to overlook, maintains that he has demonstrated: (1) That the Self-existent and Original Cause of all Things must be an Intelligent Being; (2) That the Supreme Cause and Author of all Things must of necessity be Infinitely Wise; (3) That the Supreme Cause and Author of all Things must of necessity be a Being of Infinite Goodness, Justice, and Truth, and all other Moral Perfections. The present writer contends that he has demonstrated that the Supreme Creator is Eternal, Immutable, Holy, All-Wise, Just, and Righteous.* Mr. Gillespie, in his excellent work on '*The Argument à priori for the Moral Attributes of God*,' has in language very similar to my own, proved that God is necessarily Faithful, True, and Just.†

Hamilton, Lecture xxxviii., quotes a passage from Scripture to shew that man cannot in this life know God; but, so far as that book is concerned, he could not have read

* Laws of Thought, Book I.

† It is somewhat remarkable, that two writers, at the time unknown to each other, and only a couple of hours ride apart, should have at the same time struck out, for the first part at least, in the same track.

it with any care, if he concluded that to be blessed man had only to remain ignorant of God. 'Be ye Holy, as I am Holy,' 'Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect,' are in point. In fact, the whole scheme of Revelation in the Bible is based upon a knowledge of God; but, with Hamilton and Mansel's Philosophy, Christianity is simply a delusion, or, at the best, a term without any conceivable meaning.

In reality, the question here raised lies at the bottom of all truth, and of social wellbeing. Only convince a man that he cannot know God—that his conduct may be as pleasing to Him when wrong as when right, and his conscience is destroyed. Nothing can be more opposed to all Religion, whether Natural or Revealed. 'Let us make our flight,' says Plato, 'hence thither as quickly as possible; and this flight consists *in resembling God as much as possible*, and this resemblance is the becoming holy and just with wisdom.' 'God,' says the same writer, 'being free from evil, desired that all things should as far as possible *resemble* himself.' Again, he urges men to *imitate* the workings of divinity, and so correct their own silly wanderings and blunders. 'How,' says a more recent author, 'shall we follow a pattern which we so little think of? The first step towards this copying after him is the employing our thoughts with great frequency and serious attention upon the perfections of the Divine Original.' Cicero considered that the almighty power, the unerring wisdom, spotless holiness, and infinite goodness of the Creator, were objects for the adoration and contemplation of an intelligent creation.* A writer of more modern date says, 'that in the lively knowledge of Deity consists our greatest happiness; since the more we know of God, the more we are inclined to live according to his will.' 'The Divine Majesty,' says Tucker, 'when rightly comprehended, undebased by alloying mixtures, being the idea which contributes most effectually to ennoble our thoughts,

* De Natura Deorum XIX.

to keep our conduct steady, and strengthen our dependence under unfavourable circumstances, deserves our best care and judgment to improve it.' 'Wickedness is the object of vengeance and displeasure to God, who has nothing unholy in his nature: therefore we cannot make ourselves more agreeable to him than by labouring, so far as our imperfectness will allow, to imitate his holiness.' Again, 'although we must never expect to hit the mark to perfection, yet we ought always to take our aim directly towards it, and endeavour to shape our proceedings by the completest model. Now, what more complete model can we have than the Fountain of wisdom and blessings, who is gracious in all his dealings, good and righteous in all his ways, with whom is no envy nor malice, nor passion, nor error, nor selfishness, nor variableness, nor shadow of change.'*

In concluding these notices of the Philosophy taught by Hamilton and Mansel, I submit that their doctrine abnegates the fundamental premise of Pure Reason, viz., That there is a Great First Cause; and it must therefore be, from its very nature, Atheistic. Further, this Mysticism, if propagated, would, in the end, overturn the great foundations of Morality and Religion.

Let us fervently pray that these and other false notions concerning the Existence and Attributes of the Supreme Creator, may soon be banished from the great Schools of Philosophy; and then, but not till then, can we expect a true, pure, and lofty civilization—that form of which Poets have sung, and Philosophers have prophesied—'in the kingdom of reason to come.'

* Light of Nature Pursued, vol. II. p. 365.

APPENDIX.

IDEALISM AND MATERIALISM.

I. It would be difficult, if indeed not impossible, to conceive of anything better calculated to render the cultivation of Metaphysics repulsive to an earnest enquirer, than to be told that, to become a proficient in the Science, he should require to be able to doubt, or to prove, the existence of Mind and of Matter! And yet, hunting after such moonlight shadows, has been, to a great extent, the employment of Metaphysicians for generations!

II. Strange as it may appear, the two antipodal chimeras, the pretended disbelief in soul, and the same of body, are united together by bonds of remarkable affinity; and before adverting to the phenomena of either, in a separate form, I shall endeavour to shew their united relationship.

III. Although Philosophers have, especially for the last two hundred years, spent their greatest labours, and in some instances their lives, in the vain attempt to prove that Mind and Matter exist, yet it is remarkable that they have never accomplished either point; and should they expend ten times as much effort upon the vain undertaking, the goal will be as distant as ever,—the existence of Mind and Matter never can be proved by a few Metaphysical sophisms. The realities of both are so clear, so manifest, that it is doubtful if ever sane man disbelieved the one or the other; and it is simply preposterous, and in the highest degree ridiculous, to expend life-long labours in the hope of proving what cannot *for a moment* be denied. Belief in the existence of Mind and Matter is *universal*; and this being the case, all proof is in-

competent. If a Sophist, *pretending to doubt* that there is anything in existence save a few ideas, wishes to draw an inference therefrom that there is no God, the *onus probandi* lies clearly upon him to shew that there is neither Matter nor Mind in the universe. When he proves both to be non-entities, it shall then, but not till then, be time enough to examine the conclusion he proposes to draw from premises which *should of themselves*, without anything else, prove their own falsity. If there be neither body nor soul in existence, pray to whom could I address my arguments?

IV. The rise of Materialism and Idealism in latter times was occasioned by disputes concerning the Existence of God. That Great Truth was placed in jeopardy, or at least attempted to be so, by both sets of Sophists. Now, as it could not be the case, that God could not exist because Matter only existed, and because Mind only existed, the Theist was quite entitled to say to his opponents—'Gentlemen, please settle your own disputes before coming to me.' Before the Materialists or Idealists can found any argument against the fundamental doctrine of Theism, they must arrange between themselves which card they have agreed to play, as the idea of both would be ridiculous; the one set of arguments and proofs would plainly destroy the other. Until the Theist finds that the Idealists have some prospect of swallowing up the Materialists, or the Materialists some hope of extinguishing the Idealists, it is no use for him to entertain the slightest concern as to the result of the contest. How they can ever meet to get a commencement to the battle, appears somewhat difficult for me to comprehend; for, if there be no *material* in the universe, and no *mind*, what weapons can be forged for the combatants? This, however, is a matter for their consideration, not mine. There is, if I am correctly informed, in our highest academic halls,* representatives of

* Rumour speaks of two forthcoming works, which will, I have no doubt, sustain the high reputation of Modern Athens—at least in a typographical point of view.

both sides, who, it must be presumed, are quite able to arrange their own preliminaries for an engagement; so it would be invidious for me to interfere between them; I can keep, if I choose, so far out of reach, as to run no risk of what is known as the 'redding stroke.'

V. Referring again to my Universal Truth, that there is a Great First Cause, it is manifest that I am debarred by its terms from attempting any proof, either of the existence of a Material or Intellectual world. To all such as it may suit to deny, or to doubt the existence of either, I must refer them to my counter proposition, 'That there is *not* a Great First Cause,' as under that axiom I might be able to direct some attention to their Atheistic fictions; but only under that head is it possible for me to bestow upon them that attention which, from the respectability of their supporters, they appear to merit. Unless our modern Epicureans, or our ethorial Idealists, can come to fight where there is the possibility of defeat or victory, I must be allowed to hold that both are logically gravelled. Although I would be fairly entitled to play off the one enemy against the other, it is quite possible that I might be able, notwithstanding, to take them on both at once, and try my hand at what the sportsman knows by rights and lefts—that is, taking down, it may be deer, on each side by a double gun. It cannot, however, be too fervently desired, that these two gorgons and dire chimeras, which have haunted, like dismal night-mares, the human understanding, will soon be exorcised as evil spirits, and Metaphysics allowed to take her proper place as the First Philosophy—at once the greatest and best of all the Sciences.

VI. As almost all errors in modern speculation are merely resurrectionisms, dug up from the graves of the Greek Sophists, it may be important to shew that Idealism and Materialism are both of this description; nor am I aware of any important light, or more plausible arguments used now than there

were then. Plato, who maintained the existence of *nous*, or Intelligence apart from Matter, was the greatest representative of pure Theism in ancient Philosophy; Protagoras, (and, of course, Prodicus,) Aristotle, Epicurus, and Pyrrho, may be taken as the exponents of the Anti-Theistic doctrines. The last named Sophist was the father, it may be said, of all Idealists, and, it may be affirmed, the most consistent. Diogenes Laertius informs us 'that he never shunned anything, and never guarded against anything; encountering everything, even wagons, for instance, and precipices, and dogs, and everything of that sort, committing nothing whatever to his senses.' But mark the words,—'So he used to be saved by his friends who accompanied him.' 'Once when Anaxarchus had fallen into a pond, he passed by without assisting him: Anaxarchus himself praised his indifference and absence of all emotion.' The latter Philosopher held that all possible to be seen of him was only *his bag*, not himself; and this being the case, he perhaps thought it would be no great loss to be let out of it. Pyrrho maintained that no one could know anything, and even the things which we see are just as likely to be something else as the reality, and with some other Sophists he denied the truth even of demonstrations.

At times, this ancient Berkeleyian was somewhat put about —that is, when friends were not at hand to take care of him. On one occasion while alone, when he was driven back by a dog which was attacking him, he said to some one who blamed him for being discomposed, '*that it was a difficult thing entirely for to put off humanity.*' Of one of his eminent disciples, the following characteristic trait is related; 'for, they say that he was once worked up to such a pitch of rage, that he took up a spit with the meat on it, and chased the cook as far as the market place.' Insane as such notions really are, when brought out into common life, I know not of any difference between them and those principles propagated in modern times from many of our academic chairs. It must, indeed, as Pyrrho remarked, be somewhat difficult for our modern Sophists entirely to put off humanity, and to decry

the evidences of the senses. Mr. Stewart observes, that we should have a practical example at hand of our theories, as a test of their soundness: might we look for one from an Idealist?

VII. As to that kind of Atheism speculated upon by the Greek and Roman Materialists, the notion of Aristotle may be taken as the key to it, as indeed it may do in the present day. Not only certain great philosophers, but the prevalent characteristics of modern society, have altogether a marked tendency in this direction—a tendency that suffers greatly in this respect, in contrast with the highly intellectual nature of Greek life in ancient times. The Master of the Peripatetic School then taught that *nothing enters the mind of man but through the senses*, which is equivalent to saying that there is no such substance as Mind at all. Protagoras confirmed this notion, for he asserted that there was nothing in the soul except the senses. Epicurus affirmed that the senses were the only criteria of truth; that death is only a privation of sensation, and that there was no good attainable but in the gratification of the obscene and animal passions. Theodorous taught that it was the duty of wise men to give the rein to their carnal desires in all circumstances. The whole history of ancient Greek life was, however, a protest against these horrid notions; and, like Diogenes—'that heavenly-minded dog'—they learnt more to the contempt of the goods of this life, and to despise the pleasures of sense, rather than otherwise.

VIII. The phantastic speculations of the old Idealists and Materialists seemed to have been hushed to slumber for nearly two thousand years, when they were again brought more prominently into notice. The success which attended the Aristotleian method of Induction appears to have given rise to the materialistic tendencies of Hobbes and other Philosophers of the seventeenth century. It was, however, reserved for one of the greatest and best of Englishmen who

over lived, to lay the foundation of modern Sceptical Atheism, and to undermine the fundamental doctrines of all Morality and Religion. John Locke, in his work on the Human Understanding, *inter alia*, laboured to apply the notion of Aristotle to Philosophy, that the soul is a *tabula rasa*, a waxen tablet, upon which any characters could be traced; that knowledge could only be attained through the senses; and that we cannot have any INNATE IDEAS. This fallacy Locke denominated 'Sensationalism,' under which appellation it makes so large a figure in our modern Philosophy. It is, however, but right to notice that Locke was an inconsistent upholder of his own scheme, as the following quotation will declare,—'From the consideration of ourselves, and what we infallibly find in our own constitutions, our reason leads us to this certain and self-evident truth, that there is an eternal, most powerful, and most knowing being, which, whether any one will please to call God, it matters not; the thing is evident, and from this idea duly considered, will easily be deduced all those other attributes which we ought to ascribe to this eternal being.' It would be difficult for me to obtain, from the works of ancient or modern philosophy, any passage that would more directly condemn Locke's own theory, or express more clearly the views I have feebly endeavoured to advocate.

IX. MATERIALISM.—From what has already been advanced, it will be hardly necessary to define Materialism. It is the doctrine which affirms in plain terms that there is no *Mind* in existence; and, by a necessary sequence, there can be no God. In other words, it is Atheism under one of its many aliases, but not the less truly so, because many unsuspecting Theists do not perceive it in its true light. Thales, the earliest of the Greek philosophers, thanked God that he was not born a beast; our Materialist, if consistently devout, would thank God that he was. Some of the earliest propagators of this glaring absurdity affirmed that what we regard as soul, or mind, was simply a combination of round atoms,

which had its seat in the blood, and that mankind had insensibly separated themselves from the common herd of inferior animals. Where the modern Sensationalist places the seat of his thinking principles I am unable to declare, and I do not remember to have seen any affirmation, where man is in plain English pronounced to be, even in his lowest state, on a level with the brutes. When we see an Ourang-Outang producing an *Odyssey*, or a *Paradise Lost*, we may believe this, but not till then. According to Tennemann it was Locke's Sensationalism that 'laid the foundation of Scepticism in England and France,' and 'his Empiricism had become so decidedly favorable to the cause of Atheism, Scepticism, Materialism, and Irreligion, that they induced Dr. Samuel Clarke to enter the lists as a redoubtable adversary of the new opinions.' The Sensationalism of England found a congenial seed-bed among the Encyclopædists across the channel;* and the kind of Atheism thus produced dissolved all the ties of morality, and culminated in those dreadful excesses that rendered the Revolution of last century so dark a page in the history of the human race. In the Reign of Terror, we can behold the natural effects of Sensationalism, when carried to its legitimate conclusions; and there can be no reason for supposing, that if it could fully develope itself, the calamities that it would inflict on mankind would be in any degree lessened. Whatever influence it can exert—be it greater or less—will only tend to convert this world into a Pandemonium, and cause humanity to shriek with agony, in a proportionate degree.

Perhaps the greatest supporter of Sensationalism now living, is the Philosopher I have often alluded to, Mr. John S. Mill,† who, in his criticism of Hamilton's Philosophy, appears to be a follower of Aristotle and Locke, although, it may be, unaware of the dangerous tendency of the principles he advocates. The Scottish School has been signalised by its

* See System of Nature, Chap. X.

† Examination pp. 7, 257.

uncompromising hostility to Sensationalism, and Hamilton was not far wrong when he declared this doctrine to be false, or else human nature a delusion.*

X. MODERN IDEALISM.—Bishop Berkeley, who, by general assent, was looked upon as the personification 'of every virtue under heaven,' was the father of Modern Idealistic Atheism. The silly Theist says to the Sophist, admit to me there is an outward world, and I will shew to you there is a God: the latter affects to doubt there is any reality in nature, and strange to tell, gigantic efforts have been directed to convert men into the belief of what they *never for a moment doubted.* It is enough to make one blush for Metaphysics, when he considers that his favourite science could be prostituted to such ignoble purposes as proving that there are in the world, mountains, rocks, and stones! Yet a high authority, writing only last year, affirms that this is still the great battle-ground of Metaphysics!† If so, the greater a pity it is for poor humanity. Instead of seriously going about to 'convince an Atheist,' who merely affects to doubt the Existence of God from the non-reality of an outward world, we should rather shew the arguments thus used on behalf of Atheism are fit only for a madhouse; and even there, few disciples could be got to maintain sentiments so preposterous. Some of the earlier philosophers of the Scottish School opposed this form of Atheism by proving the qualities of matter. Mr. Mill, in our day, appears to think he has invented a sentence that will do much to settle the question: he defines matter to be a 'Permanent Possibility of Sensation', which learned jingle I presume is a most clever device, although, I confess, the words do not convey to me any intelligible meaning. The French School of Sophists distinctly repudiated this way of doing Atheism. In noticing Berkeley's Idealism, Von Holbach says, 'This

* Lecture 39, Vol., 2, p. 394.

† Mill's Examination, p. 154.

prince of Idealists laboured hard to prove that everything in this world is nothing more than a chimerical illusion; that the universe exists nowhere but in himself, and has rendered all things problematical by the aid of Sophisms.' 'He that gainsays the evidence of an external world,' says Dr. Reid, 'is not self-contradictory—by no means—he is only mad.' If, after such an authority, I might be allowed a remark, I should say, he is cousin-german to the philosopher who deliberately, and in real earnest, sets about *to prove* that matter exists otherwise than in the mind. It would be rather difficult, for example, for an emigrant to sail towards America, supposing it to have only an existence in the imagination of a speculative Idealist. What a strange delusion for a rational being, destined for eternity, ever to reason himself into the absurdity that the world under his feet was simply a chimerical illusion in his head! Yet it is upon hallucinations like these—that there is no Matter, and that there is no Mind, in existence—Sophistry has attempted to raise aloft her voice, and get deluded mortals to doubt or to disbelieve the fundamental, the loftiest, and the greatest truth in existence, THAT THERE IS A GREAT FIRST CAUSE.

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